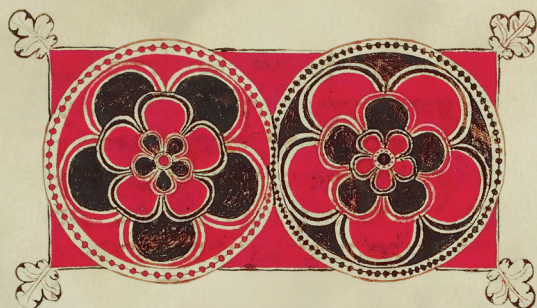
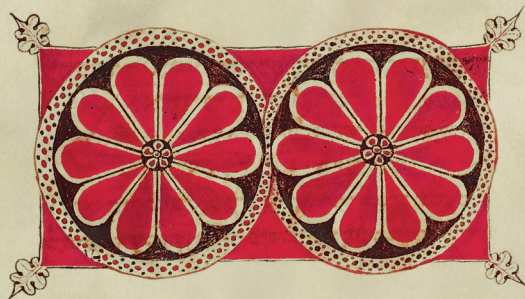




*Compassion and
the Characterization
of the Markan Jesus*



JONATHAN W. BRYANT

Compassion and the Characterization of the Markan Jesus

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By

Jonathan W. Bryant



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*To Sharon, my dear wife, whose patient and unwavering
support has made this book possible*



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Emotions and the Miracles of Jesus

1 Purpose and Course of Study

In nearly thirty stories of specific miracles attributed to Jesus in the Gospels, Jesus's emotions are on display in about one-third of the accounts.¹ Yet, in scholarly treatments of these miracle stories, the depictions of Jesus's emotions are seldom discussed. In a sense, this tendency is readily understandable, given the proclivity of miracle studies to be situated within the wider category of works on the historical Jesus. That is, since many treatments of the miracles of Jesus deliberate on the historicity of the accounts, specific elements within the narratives are often of little concern in such studies.²

1 The words *miracle* and *emotion* could both generate controversy, so it is necessary at this point to offer at least a preliminary explanation of how I intend to use these two terms. Much has been made of the use of the term *miracle* as a descriptor of Jesus's activity as portrayed in the Gospels, given the tendency of groups, especially of a religious nature, to associate their heroes/founders with a positive term like "miracle" while identifying such figures in other (especially rival) groups with negative terms like "magic." See, e.g., Harold Remus, *Pagan-Christian Conflict over Miracle in the Second Century*, Patristic Monograph Series 10 (Cambridge, MA: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1983). For the purposes of this study, my use of the term *miracle* is largely a reflection of traditional terminology in the field of New Testament studies. This study is not apologetic, and I will use the term indiscriminately in reference to stories from throughout Greco-Roman and Jewish literature. I am including as a "miracle story" any depiction of events that is portrayed as happening outside of natural causes. In other words, while there may be much variation regarding what can be considered miraculous in our modern conceptions, I intend to take my cues primarily from how an author depicts a situation for their audience. The term *emotion* does not seem to carry the same level of baggage, at least within New Testament scholarship, as *miracle*. Nonetheless, it must be recognized that there is variation at the historical, lexical, and psychological levels as to how emotions are understood (what constitutes "emotion," what types of experiences are properly labeled as emotions, etc.). Without denying the importance of recognizing these variations, especially when relying on modern categories to discuss ancient concepts of emotions, I would like to appeal to a general construct of "emotion" that seems to largely transcend its diverse descriptions. Here, I take my cue from Robert C. Roberts, who offers a brief, but broadly applicable, definition of emotion. Roberts defines emotions as "concern-based construals" (Roberts, *Spiritual Emotions: A Psychology of Christian Virtues* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007], 11. They are construals in the sense that they are "states in which the subject grasps, with a kind of perceptual immediacy, a significance of his or her situation." They are concern-based in that they are "affected by what the subject cares about, what is important to him or her."

2 One notable exception is Gerd Theissen, *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1983), who identifies thirty-three motifs in the Gospel miracle accounts.

Yet, the relative neglect of emotions in the treatment of the miracle stories is striking given the fact that miracle studies frequently engage in comparative analysis, seeking to draw parallels, or reacting to purported parallels, between the accounts of Jesus's miracles and those of other miracle workers in Jewish and Greco-Roman literature. In these comparative analyses, the role of emotions in miracle stories has been ignored even though, as we will see, the portrayal of emotions among miracle workers provides fertile ground for comparison.

The present study arose from the question, *Why does the Gospel of Mark make specific and repeated reference to the compassion of Jesus in the miracle stories?* As Ole Davidsen points out, "The most elementary wonder-narrative might read as follows: 'Jesus cured many who were sick with various diseases.'"³ Yet, the author of Mark has much more to say. So what is the import of the portrayal of Jesus's compassion in relation to the miracles attributed to him in Mark? And if this portrayal of emotion in relation to Jesus's miracles is shown to be exceptional in comparison to the stories of other miracle workers, which will be argued here, how might that add to our understanding of the characterization of Jesus in Mark? Finally, what might this facet of the Markan characterization of Jesus contribute to the Markan audience's response to the story of Mark?

In order to address these questions, this study will first examine the use of emotion language in miracle accounts from Greco-Roman and Jewish literature.⁴ This is a necessary step in determining whether the emotional portrayal of the Markan miracle worker Jesus is exceptional. Among the surveys of ancient miracle workers⁵ and the studies of Jesus's miracles,⁶ there is no detailed attempt to analyze the portrayal of emotions in the stories of the

3 Ole Davidsen, *The Narrative Jesus: A Semiotic Reading of Mark's Gospel* (Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 1993), 101.

4 The term *emotion language* will be used throughout the book to describe the use of terms that denote emotions in ancient literature, rather than employing terminology that might connote the evoking of an emotional response among ancient readers (e.g., *emotive language*).

5 E.g., Wendy Cotter, *Miracles in Greco-Roman Antiquity: A Sourcebook* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Barry Blackburn, *Theios Anēr and the Markan Miracle Traditions: A Critique of the Theios Anēr Concept as an Interpretive Background of the Miracle Traditions Used by Mark*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: Mohr, 1991), 13–96; Eric Eve, *The Jewish Context of Jesus' Miracles*, JSNTSup 231 (London: Sheffield Academic, 2002).

6 E.g., H. van der Loos, *The Miracles of Jesus*, NovTSup 9 (Leiden: Brill, 1965); Gerd Theissen, *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1983), originally published in German as *Urchristliche Wundergeschichten: Ein Beitrag zur formgeschichtlichen Erforschung der synoptischen Evangelien* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1974); Howard Clark Kee, *Miracle in the Early Christian World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983); Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical and Theological Study* (Downers

miracle workers. Chapters 2 and 3 of the present work seek to fill in this lacuna, allowing us to theorize about what a first-century perspective on emotions and miracle workers may have been. In chapter 2, we will examine emotional portrayal in Greco-Roman miracle stories, while the focus of chapter 3 will be miracle stories from Jewish literature. In both chapters the primary focus will be on texts most proximate to the Gospel of Mark,⁷ though certain older texts that would have been widely known to a first-century audience (e.g., the Homeric epics) will also be included in the analyses. Based on the findings of these analyses, we will have a framework for comparing the portrayal of Jesus's emotions in the miracle stories attributed to him with the depictions of other miracle workers.

Chapter 4 will examine the particular emotion term *σπλάγχνα* (and cognates), tracing its usage and development in the literature of the late Hellenistic and early Roman periods. A key component of this development is the emergence of the verb *σπλαγχνίζομαι*, a term that appears repeatedly in the miracle stories of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark. This term surfaces as the subject of this investigation into the emotional portrayal of the miracle worker Jesus for two reasons. First, Greek words denoting “pity,” “compassion,” or “mercy” (*ἐλεέω* and *οἰκτίρω* and cognates) are the most often used terms of emotion in the miracle stories surveyed in chapters 2 and 3. So when the author of Mark's Gospel likewise portrays the miracle worker Jesus in terms of his compassion but uses a distinct term, that raises interesting questions. Second, *σπλαγχνίζομαι*, though a rare term in the literature prior to Mark, is the most often used term of emotion in Mark's Gospel,⁸ suggesting its importance for the Markan author and for our understanding of Mark's characterization of Jesus.

The reasons for this study's focus on the Gospel of Mark are also twofold. First is an adherence to the viewpoint that Mark's account was written first among the Gospels and that Mark served as a source for Matthew and Luke. Within this framework of Markan priority, a proper understanding of Mark's use of compassion language must precede any attempt to analyze the

Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999); Craig S. Keener, *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts*, 2 vols (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).

7 The majority of scholars place the composition of Mark around 70 CE, proximate in time to the destruction of the Jerusalem temple; see, e.g., the discussions of Mark's date in Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, WBC 34a (Dallas: Word, 1989), xxxi–xxxii; Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 11–14; Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 13–15.

8 As discussed in chapter 5, the Gospel of Mark contains sixteen emotion terms, nine of which occur directly in miracle stories, while two additional uses occur in an indirect relationship to the Markan Jesus's performance of miracles. Three of the nine instances of the emotional portrayal of Jesus in the miracle stories are *σπλαγχνίζομαι*. (This number may be four; see the discussion of the textual issue at Mark 1:41 in chapter 5.)

appearance of such language in the other Gospels. Second, Mark gives a great deal of attention proportionally to the miracle stories of Jesus, suggesting that the miracle stories are of particular importance to understanding Mark's overarching purposes.

In chapter 5, we will examine in detail the miracle stories in Mark in which *σπλαγχνίζομαι* appears. The characterization of the Markan Jesus that emerges from this examination will be shown to fit within the overarching purposes of the Markan narrative. Specifically, the portrayal of Jesus's compassion, through Mark's use of *σπλαγχνίζομαι*, undergirds the characterization of the Markan Jesus as one whose others-oriented service is demonstrated not only in his suffering and death but also in his individual encounters with human need. The encounters themselves are thus seen to offer a key contribution to understanding the Markan Jesus.⁹ Further, it will be argued that this portrayal displays for Jesus's followers—those in the story world along with the Markan audience—the type of response expected in their own encounters with human need.

The conclusions reached in chapter 5 regarding the characterization of the Markan Jesus will provide an indication of the exceptional nature of that portrayal among the stories of miracle workers in the ancient Greco-Roman world. How this plays out specifically in relation to the findings of chapters 2 through 4 will be the subject of the concluding chapter.

As the preceding outline suggests, this study is situated at the intersection of three scholarly fields: miracle studies, character studies, and emotion studies. By bringing together elements of these typically separated fields of study, we gain something of significance in our understanding of the Markan Jesus. Specifically, while miracle studies and character studies often seek to further our understanding of the Markan Jesus, both fields of study have done so while giving little attention to the portrayal of Jesus's emotions. The remainder of this chapter will demonstrate this lacuna in modern biblical scholarship, assessing the treatment of emotions (or lack thereof) in both miracle studies and character studies. This will be followed by a discussion of emotion studies and the Bible. This is a burgeoning field in biblical scholarship, and a number of works on the topic have emerged in the last decade. A survey of these works will help situate the present work within biblical scholarship while also demonstrating that to this point these works have seldom drawn a connection between emotions and either miracles or characterization. The hope is that this study offers a significant contribution to biblical emotion studies while

9 See Wendy J. Cotter, *The Christ of the Miracle Stories: Portrait through Encounter* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010).

also encouraging the further intersection of such studies with related areas of study. Finally, the chapter will conclude with some additional comments on methodology.

2 Miracle Studies and the Treatment of Jesus's Emotions

Many of the works written in the last several decades on the miracles of Jesus focus primarily on the question of historicity, that is, whether the miracles attributed to Jesus in the Gospels trace their origin to the historical Jesus, or at least whether that is a reasonable possibility. This tendency reflects a response to the influential *Religionsgeschichte* approaches that dominated much of the first half of twentieth-century Jesus scholarship, which sought to dismantle the prospect of the historicity of the miracles of Jesus. Though consensus remains elusive in such an endeavor, we can isolate a tendency within recent studies to conclude that Jesus is likely to have at least performed healings and exorcisms as part of his ministry.¹⁰

The portrayal of Jesus's emotions has received very little attention in these studies. This is particularly interesting given the widespread attention that is given to purported parallels to the Gospel miracle stories. As we will see, differences between the emotional portrayal in the miracle stories of Jesus and that of other miracle workers of the ancient world can generate fruitful discussion.

A tracing of scholarly deliberations on the portrayal of Jesus's emotions in miracles studies will demonstrate the paucity of material on the subject. While such an outline could begin at any point in the history of critical Jesus research, we begin in the latter half of the twentieth century for two reasons. First, this places our discussion definitively in a post-Bultmannian period. Because the present work will employ a narrative-critical approach to the Gospel of Mark, the objectives of the *Religionsgeschichte* discussions of the first half of the twentieth century fall outside the purview of this study. The approach to Mark taken here is not interested in identifying the origin of Mark's source material but rather is concerned with analyzing the Markan narrative as a whole. Second, this starting point allows us to devote attention to more current research. Many significant works on the miracles of Jesus have been published since the middle of the twentieth century, and these works sufficiently demonstrate the point that, in miracle studies, the topic of Jesus's emotions is virtually neglected.

10 Miracles of raising the dead and the nature miracles have not found this level of support for historicity among scholars.

We begin with H. van der Loos's 750-page work, *The Miracles of Jesus*, published in 1965. Van der Loos set out to take on the rationalistic skepticism that had come to predominate modern scholarship on the miracles of Jesus. The *Religionsgeschichte* and *Formgeschichte* approaches to the study of Jesus's miracles had resulted in widespread incredulity concerning the historicity of the claims made in the Gospels about the miraculous activity of Jesus. In trying to achieve his objectives, van der Loos not only deals with the tensions arising in studying the miracles in relation to modern science and medicine but also offers a full-scale treatment of several important facets of the study of Jesus's miracles, including the identification of miracle "types," discussions of terminology,¹¹ Jewish background to the miracles, the presentation of Jesus as a miracle worker, and the function of the miracles. These same topics emerge often in subsequent treatments of Jesus's miracles. Additionally, van der Loos provides a commentary on each of the miracle stories of Jesus that he identifies in the Gospel accounts. However, in spite of his detailed treatment of how Jesus operated as a miracle worker (including a discussion of the potential purposes in his performing miracles) and of the individual stories themselves,¹² van der Loos seldom raises the topic of Jesus's emotions.

In a discussion of the function and significance of Jesus's miracles, van der Loos lists four commonly held notions. Along with the ideas that the miracles served as proofs of Jesus's identity, as a means of arousing faith, or as signs, van der Loos gives a fourth notion, that their purpose was the display of mercy. But he does not deliberate on what it means for Jesus to respond with mercy to someone in need, nor does he discuss the terminology employed. As in the other three notions, van der Loos merely points to a handful of scholars who favor this perspective—doing so here in only two brief paragraphs—himself offering no input on the matter. Van der Loos subsumes all four notions under what he sees as the dominant function of the miracles of Jesus: to perform a salvific role within the kingdom of God.

When van der Loos shifts his attention to commenting on the individual miracle stories of the Gospels, his emphasis on the emotional portrayal of Jesus remains quite scant. In his discussion of the Markan miracle stories in

11 The pervasiveness of discussions concerning the relationship between miracle, magic, and medicine in studies of Jesus's miracles cannot be overstated. Both the attempt to conflate such categories and the attempt to distinguish clear boundaries between the categories have been forcefully argued again and again, and such discussions become a companion to arguments put forward for both apologetic and skeptical purposes.

12 Van der Loos's section on "Jesus as Miracle-Worker" comprises some 160 pages, and his commentary on the individual miracle stories of the Gospels spans 360 pages.

which Jesus's compassion surfaces, van der Loos merely recognizes in two of the stories that it is mentioned (Mark 8:1–10; 9:14–29).¹³ He refers to Jesus's healing of the man with leprosy in Mark 1:40–45 as “a deed of mercy,”¹⁴ though he offers no further comment on the topic.

Gerd Theissen, in *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition*, identified thirty-three motifs that are shown to be present in ancient accounts of miracles, including those of the Gospels. The seventeenth motif he discusses is what he refers to as “pneumatic excitement,” which, broadly speaking, deals with the miracle worker's reaction in response to situations of distress.¹⁵ According to Theissen, in the Gospels such a reaction finds expression in the verbs *σπλαγχνίζομαι* (“have/feel compassion,” Mark 1:41; 6:34; 8:2), *ὀργίζεσθαι* (“be angry,” 1:41, v.1), *ἐμβριμάσθαι* (“sternly warn” or “be greatly disturbed,” 1:43; John 11:33, 38), *συλλυπέσθαι* (“be grieved with,” Mark 3:5), and *στενάζειν* (“sigh,” 7:34), along with the implied “sigh” of 9:19.¹⁶ Theissen concludes that such expressions reflect a suffering on the part of the miracle worker due to the “barrier between human distress, blindness, unbelief, and the realm of super-human salvation.”¹⁷ This barrier or boundary is often reinforced, he argues, by these expressions of pneumatic excitement, perhaps most explicitly shown in the exclamation, “O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you?” (Mark 9:19). Yet, the boundary is occasionally crossed by Jesus, such as when he “marvels” at the faith of the centurion (Matt 8:10) or has “compassion” on the crowds prior to the miraculous feedings (Mark 6:34; 8:2).¹⁸ Theissen does not attempt to explain, however, how exactly compassion serves to cross this boundary between miracle worker and distressed persons.

Aside from these brief comments, which essentially serve the purpose of illustrating this particular motif, Thiessen does not consider miracle workers' emotional responses to the distress of others. The discussion of motifs in general simply makes up one part of Theissen's synchronic analysis, which attempts to provide a detailed outline of all the data that can be gleaned from the miracle stories of the Gospels. And although Theissen gives significant attention in his work to comparative material from a variety of literary

13 Van der Loos conflates his treatment of the two miraculous feeding accounts into one discussion.

14 van der Loos, *Miracles of Jesus*, 494.

15 Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 57–58.

16 Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 57.

17 Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 57–58.

18 Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 78.

traditions,¹⁹ the topic of the emotional portrayal of miracle workers plays no role in his discussion.

In his 1983 work on miracles, *Miracle in the Early Christian World*, Howard Clark Kee joins the critique of the history-of-religions methods that dominated scholarship on the miracle stories of Jesus throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Kee is particularly disapproving of the use of parallelism without attentiveness to historical and cultural context.²⁰ He provides an alternative approach that seeks to give adequate attention to the life world in which the so-called parallel accounts arose. In doing so, Kee provides a “history of miracle” in the Greco-Roman world from Alexander to the Antonines, approximately the late fourth century BCE to the early third century CE. Throughout the book, Kee places heavy emphasis on the diverse functions miracles had, as the contexts shift between the various accounts. For Kee, miracles could function to provide attestation for a leader, to demonstrate power over cosmic evil (in apocalyptic texts), to confirm the outworking of divine purposes (through portents), to convey symbolic meaning, or to serve as propaganda (in both Christian and pagan literature).

Amid these varied purposes, the role of miracle in addressing individual human need comes up in Kee’s discussions of the cults of Asclepius and Isis. Kee refers to compassion in relation to the Isis myth. He observes that the notion of Isis as a compassionate healer seems to be a relatively late development in the Isis traditions, and he argues that the idea stems from the account in which Isis is portrayed as weeping for her brother Osiris at his death and exerting the effort to embalm his body.²¹ In the case of both Isis and Asclepius, Kee suggests that the purpose of miracle undergoes modification over time and in different contexts, such that individual physical need is not always in view.²² Regardless, in the sections in which Kee turns to discuss the functions

19 John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, vol. 2, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles* (New York: Yale University Press, 1994), 576, underscores this attribute of Theissen’s work.

20 At one point, Kee states, “The identification of ‘parallels’ cannot pass for responsible historical work. What is required is careful analysis of texts in context, including as thorough and sensitive as possible analytical reconstruction of the context” (*Early Christian World*, 296).

21 Kee, *Early Christian World*, 107–8.

22 Specifically, Kee suggests that the emphasis on personal healing among these figures was common in the late Hellenistic period but dissipated in later time, with the focus of their intervention in the world often shifting to a salvific role (see, e.g., *Early Christian World*, 103–4). It should also be noted that, in speaking of the Jewish prophets Elijah and Elisha, Kee, *Early Christian World*, 149, states, “His [Elijah’s] miracles include acts of mercy, such as preserving a starving widow and restoring her son to life (1 Kgs. 17), as do those of his

of Jesus's miracles, the literary traditions about Isis and Asclepius do not receive attention. Instead, Kee tends to situate the miraculous activity of Jesus within the apocalyptic tradition, arguing that the miracles largely served to demonstrate Jesus's power over the cosmic forces of evil as he ushered in the kingdom of God.²³ Kee also devotes some attention to the role of the portents in Matthew²⁴ and the signs in John.²⁵ Kee joins both of these elements with the apocalyptic function, however, locating the miracles of Jesus within the broad category of unveiling God's cosmic purposes. The interpersonal element, which came up in the discussions of Isis and Asclepius, in which miracles function simply to address individual, physical human need, becomes stunted with respect to Kee's discussion of Jesus's miracles.

Graham Twelftree's 1999 *Jesus the Miracle Worker* is largely situated within the field of historical Jesus studies, yet Twelftree's frequent reference to Jesus's compassion is notable for our purposes. Twelftree not only raises the topic in his treatment of individual passages in which the word *σπλαγχνίζομαι* appears; he also alludes at various points to the important role of compassion as a motivating factor in a number of the miracles of Jesus.²⁶ Twelftree thus suggests that many of the miracles attributed to Jesus are depicted as occurring not merely as a demonstration of Jesus's power but as a response to human need. Twelftree's conclusion that the majority of the miracles attributed to Jesus in the Gospels can reasonably be considered to have historical veracity increases the import of this notion all the more.²⁷ However, since the connection of the miracle stories with the historical Jesus is not the focus of the present study, we will not pursue this point further here. Still, this attentiveness to the role of Jesus's compassion, seldom seen in miracle studies, suggests that perhaps more can be done to understand the part that compassion plays in the Gospel accounts of Jesus's miracles.

In his 2002 work on miracles, *The Jewish Context of Jesus' Miracles*, Eric Eve undertakes the task of surveying an extensive amount of Jewish literary material in the attempt to identify more fully the context in which Jesus's miracles

successor, Elisha (2 Kgs. 4) who cures a non-Israelite of leprosy (2 Kgs. 5)." However, in the Elijah and Elisha narratives, no word connoting "mercy," "compassion," or the like is employed. Their "mercy" is only a potential inference from the biblical accounts.

23 Kee, *Early Christian World*, 156–70.

24 Kee, *Early Christian World*, 183–90.

25 Kee, *Early Christian World*, 221–41.

26 See, e.g., Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 95, 264, 357.

27 So, Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 264, states, "That the vast majority of the miracles attributed to Jesus relate to relieving human suffering and need gives rise to the view that compassion was implicit in the historical Jesus' motivation for performing miracles."

can be understood. In doing so, Eve does not presume that there is a direct link between each of the various strands of Jewish material; nonetheless, the information he gathers from this wide-ranging survey can help identify the ways in which Jewish people in the first century could have conceived meaning in relation to Jesus's miracles. Eve's study provides perhaps the most comprehensive presentation of comparative Jewish material, including much material that predates the time of Jesus.²⁸

Eve states his thesis "that Jesus—both the narrative Jesus of the gospels and the historical Jesus—stands out as a highly distinctive figure in respect of his miracle-working in the Judaism of his time, and yet makes sense as a miracle-worker in his Jewish context."²⁹ In other words, on the one hand, the portrayal of Jesus as a miracle worker reflects to a certain degree the depictions of other miracle workers from Jewish literary history, thus marking the characterization of Jesus in the Gospels within familiar territory. On the other hand, the differences between the portrayal of Jesus as a miracle worker and the depictions of other Jewish miracle workers indicated to the first-century audiences of the Gospels that the subject of their stories was exceptional. For Eve, where the distinction most clearly plays out is in the portrayal of Jesus as a "bearer of numinous power," thus standing against the other figures surveyed, who are either "mediators of numinous power" or "petitioners of numinous power."³⁰ That is, in the miraculous activity associated with other Jewish miracle workers, God is ultimately the actor in the account, but in the miraculous activity attributed to Jesus, the miracle worker himself is shown to have the power to effect the miracle.³¹ Eve also speculates that the miraculous

28 The inclusion of pre-Jesus material would seem to be an inherent part of comparative studies; however, many studies, when referencing Jewish miracle workers that merit comparison to Jesus, only utilize traditions that are dated a couple of centuries after the time of Jesus, namely, the rabbinic literature concerning Hōni the Circle Drawer and Hānina ben Dosa.

29 Eve, *Jewish Context*, 23.

30 These categories are taken up from Werner Kahl, *New Testament Miracle Stories in Their Religious-Historical Setting: A Religionsgeschichtliche Comparison from a Structural Perspective* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994). Kahl introduces the categories on page 76.

31 See the interaction with Eve's analysis in J. R. Daniel Kirk, *A Man Attested by God: The Human Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 487. Kirk implies that the distinction is overemphasized, pointing out that Jesus, whom Kirk sees as operating as an idealized human figure more so than as a divine being, performs his miraculous actions as a result of his having been empowered by the Spirit of God; hence, God (the Father) is ultimately still the actor in the miracles of Jesus. While the distinctions espoused by Eve may not be as sharply delineated as he suggests, it does seem notable that Jesus is presented as initiator and sole actor of the miracles ascribed to him. Kirk

activity of Jesus may have had eschatological implications that were not seen among the actions of other Jewish miracle workers.³² Specifically, Eve considers it plausible that Jesus “made creative use of individual healings as an acted metaphor (or parable) of the coming of the Kingdom of God.”³³ The topic of compassion scarcely arises in the book,³⁴ and Eve makes no attempt to see in the miracle stories of Jesus a distinctive element with regard to the emotional depiction of the miracle worker, even though his study is centered on the literary similarities and dissimilarities between the accounts of Jesus’s miracles and other miracle accounts.

In 2011, Craig Keener published a two-volume work on the miracles of Jesus, *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts*. As its name suggests, the book’s intention is to argue for the credibility of the miracle stories attributed to Jesus and his followers. Keener presents apologetic, philosophical arguments and provides a substantial number of examples of miracle accounts from various periods of history and diverse regional origin in order to substantiate his position. While such arguments are not pertinent to the present study, Keener makes occasional reference to the role of compassion in the miracle stories of Jesus.³⁵ As is the case with Twelftree’s work discussed earlier, Keener’s treatment of miracles is not specifically concerned with the portrayal of Jesus’s emotions. Yet, like Twelftree, Keener hints at the notion that compassion plays an important role in the Gospel accounts of Jesus’s miracles.

Finally, a couple of works that are not strictly miracle studies merit attention in this discussion due to their sizeable treatment of the miracles of Jesus and their significant effect on scholarship. Geza Vermes’s *Jesus the Jew*, originally published in 1973,³⁶ has been quite influential in miracle studies over the past

may be overemphasizing the similarities in his attempt to present Jesus as comparable to other human figures.

32 Eve, *Jewish Context*, 379–81.

33 Eve, *Jewish Context*, 266.

34 In his chapter on the works of Philo, Eve offers some discussion of the depiction of God’s compassion (*Jewish Context*, 76–77). Occasionally, in Philo’s treatment of miracles that generally are shown to have a punitive purpose (e.g., the destruction of Sodom or the plagues against Egypt), Philo talks about God’s compassion in performing such acts. For example, Philo contends that God’s destruction of Sodom served to prevent the evil practices of that city from spreading and leading to more destruction (*Abraham* 136). In the case of the plagues, God mercifully checked his judgment by not completely wiping out the Egyptians (*Moses* 1.101–34).

35 Keener, *Miracles*, 1:68; 2:643, 768.

36 Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian’s Reading of the Gospels* (London: William Collins Sons & Co., 1973; repr., Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981).

four decades, as a result of its emphasis upon Jesus's Jewish context.³⁷ Prior to this work, much of the discussion of material considered comparable to the Gospel accounts of Jesus's miracles emphasized purported Greco-Roman parallels, to the relative neglect of potential Jewish parallels. Vermes sought to situate Jesus within a Galilean charismatic tradition having roots in the Elijah and Elisha stories and most clearly reflected in the traditions pertaining to Honi the Circle Drawer and Hanina ben Dosa.³⁸ Vermes's conclusions have subsequently been challenged by numerous scholars.³⁹ The main criticisms are of Vermes's use of sources, as his thesis is dependent on sources about Honi and Hanina from much later than the Gospel accounts, and his use of the category *hasidim*, which he considers a distinct movement of Galilean charismatic figures. Nonetheless, his appeal to look to Jewish traditions for the most relevant background material for understanding the accounts of Jesus's miracles continues to have repercussions in the field, as seen, for example, in the aforementioned work of Eric Eve.⁴⁰ The texts concerning Honi and Hanina used by Vermes do not include any reference to the emotional state of these miracle workers, and Vermes does not address the topic of emotions.

John Meier devotes 531 pages to the topic of Jesus's miracles in the second volume of his magnum opus, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*.⁴¹ Meier provides a treatment of the primary issues addressed in most miracle studies: the modern notion of miracle, the distinction of terminology (magic, medicine, miracle), the Greco-Roman and Jewish parallels, the self-understanding of Jesus, and the analysis of individual pericopae from the Gospels. Meier's primary objective is not detailed exegesis. Rather, it is to identify elements which can reasonably be traced back to the historical Jesus.⁴² For Meier, the portrayals of Jesus's emotions reflect redactional material. This is most clearly hinted at in Meier's discussion of Mark 1:40–45: "Filling out the basic story are a few details emphasizing the attitudes and emotions of both

37 See Jack Dean Kingsbury, review of *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels*, by Geza Vermes, *Interpretation* 30 no. 2 (1976): 206, 210; see also Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 9; Barry L. Blackburn, "The Miracles of Jesus," in *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research*, ed. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 375–79; Keener, *Miracles*, 76; Eve, *Jewish Context*, 7.

38 Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 69–80.

39 See, e.g., Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, 156–57; Alan J. Avery-Peck, "The Galilean Charismatic and Rabbinic Piety: The Holy Man in the Talmudic Literature," in *The Historical Jesus in Context*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine, Dale C. Allison Jr., and John Dominic Crossan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 149–65; Eve, *Jewish Context*, 272–95.

40 See Eve, *Jewish Context*, 7.

41 Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:507–1038.

42 Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:679.

parties. ... Shorn of the Marcan conclusion, and perhaps also of the expressions of emotion by the leper and Jesus, the narrative exemplifies the bare bones of what would be needed to tell the story of the cleansing of a leper."⁴³ As such, Meier does not explicate the topic of emotions. Regarding the treatment of potential parallels from Greco-Roman and Jewish literature, Meier conveys a general sense of caution. He contends that too often the proposed similarities between the accounts are overemphasized, with the result that the differences are neglected.⁴⁴ In this discussion, however, Meier does not make use of the differences in the accounts regarding the portrayal of the miracle workers' emotions, nor does he give much attention to the varied roles miracles play among the different accounts he assesses.⁴⁵

This survey of miracle studies spanning the last several decades is representative rather than comprehensive and has sought to demonstrate the general paucity of reflection on the depiction of Jesus's emotions in the miracle accounts of the Gospels. While scholars have devoted much attention to examining the potential parallels to the miracle stories of Jesus from both Greco-Roman and Jewish sources, the topic of emotional portrayal remains virtually untapped in such studies.

3 Markan Character Studies and the Treatment of Jesus's Emotions

Character studies became prevalent as a byproduct of the emergence of narrative criticism within New Testament studies. This emergence can largely be traced to the 1982 publication of *Mark as Story*,⁴⁶ an attempt to bring insights from the field of English literary criticism to the study of Mark's Gospel.⁴⁷

43 Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:701.

44 Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:601.

45 An exception is found in his discussion of miracle in Josephus: "In *The Antiquities* miracles occur particularly to authenticate the mission of a prophet as truly sent by God (e.g., *Ant.* 2.13.1; 2.13.2–3), as opposed to false prophets" (Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:590).

46 Christopher W. Skinner, "The Study of Character(s) in the Gospel of Mark: A Survey of Research from Wrede to the Performance Critics (1901 to 2014)," in *Character Studies and the Gospel of Mark*, ed. Christopher W. Skinner and Matthew Ryan Hauge (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 23, states that *Mark as Story* "served as the official introduction of narrative criticism to NT studies." Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *Mark's Jesus: Characterization as Narrative Christology* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 5, says that "the narrative critical approach to Mark's Gospel ... was introduced to a broader audience" by *Mark as Story*.

47 David Rhoads and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982). In 1999, Rhoads was joined by Joanna Dewey in

This work was written under the premise that since the Gospel of Mark is telling a story, it could appropriately be studied as a coherent narrative, in a way that takes into account elements like narrator, setting, plot, rhetoric, and characters.⁴⁸ The rise of narrative-critical approaches to the Gospel of Mark has resulted in a proliferation of character studies, which have been conducted on numerous Markan characters, including the main character, Jesus.⁴⁹

It should be noted, however, that the analysis of the Markan portrayal of Jesus was by no means a novel endeavor that simply accompanied the narrative-critical approach. In fact, one could say that the topic of Jesus's identity in Mark was one of the most pronounced topics in New Testament scholarship of the twentieth century.

William Wrede's groundbreaking work on the secrecy motif in Mark raised numerous questions about the identity of Jesus.⁵⁰ Wrede drew attention to the contradictions inherent in Mark's portrayal of Jesus's disciples, using this observation as a springboard to suggest a distinction between the historical identity of Jesus and the identity that is espoused in the Markan text.⁵¹ Wrede concluded that much of what can be gleaned about Jesus's identity from Mark's Gospel can be attributed to the theological creativity of the Evangelist. The far-reaching effects of Wrede's emphases can be evidenced throughout

producing a heavily revised second edition of this work, which takes into account numerous developments that had arisen within narrative-critical approaches since the original publication of *Mark as Story* (David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*, 2nd ed. [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999]). A third edition was then published in 2012 (David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*, 3rd ed. [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012]), which was not as substantial a revision as the second edition but nonetheless incorporated three important changes: a greater emphasis on the orality/aurality of the Gospel, an interpretive shift that highlights the cosmic conflict embedded in the Gospel, and an attentiveness to setting the presentation of the story in a Roman imperial context soon after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. These subsequent editions substantiate the long-standing usefulness of *Mark as Story*. The pioneering work of Robert Tannehill in relation to the narrative-critical approach should also be noted. In 1979, Tannehill penned an article entitled, "The Gospel of Mark as Narrative Christology," *Semeia* 16 (1980): 57–95, which includes a discussion of characterization. Tannehill states, "Characterization takes place through the narration of action. We learn who Jesus is through what he says and does in the context of the action of others. Therefore, the study of character ... can only be approached through the study of plot" (58).

48 Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story*, 2nd ed., 3–7.

49 See Skinner, "Study of Character(s)," 26–27, for a listing of recent literature published on various characters in the Gospel of Mark.

50 William Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien: Zugleich ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Markusevangeliums* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901).

51 See Skinner, "Study of Character(s)," 5.

twentieth-century Markan scholarship by the prevalent focus both on Mark's presentation of the disciples and on the way various titles of Jesus are employed in the Gospel.⁵²

The appearance of numerous Christological titles in the Gospel of Mark has indeed provided many scholars an entry into understanding questions concerning Jesus's identity and has led to an abundance of studies on the subject. One particular discussion of the Christological titles that gained significant traction was the proposition of a θεῖος ἀνὴρ Christology.⁵³ This approach sought to understand the use of the title "son of God" for Jesus in relation to the Hellenistic motif of a θεῖος ἀνὴρ ("divine man"). This inherently directed the focus outside the text itself, based on the assumption that the author of Mark's Gospel was attempting—especially in the miracle stories—to fashion the identity of Jesus in such a way as to be comparable to other supposed divinely inspired individuals known from the Hellenistic world.

Building on the θεῖος ἀνὴρ proposition, Theodore Weeden published an article in 1968 entitled "The Heresy That Necessitated Mark's Gospel,"⁵⁴ in which he argued that the Gospel of Mark contains two contrasting christologies: a θεῖος ἀνὴρ Christology and a suffering Jesus Christology.⁵⁵ In Weeden's understanding, Mark is offering a suffering Jesus Christology as the appropriate perspective over against a θεῖος ἀνὴρ Christology, which is depicted throughout in the flawed understanding of the disciples. This proposed theological move by Mark became known as "corrective Christology," an interpretive framework that was followed by a number of scholars.⁵⁶ This "corrective" approach naturally supported the bifurcation of "son of God" Christologies and "son of man" Christologies,⁵⁷ a bifurcation which has remained pronounced in Markan

52 Skinner, "Study of Character(s)," 7.

53 See, e.g., Ludwig Bieler, *Theios anēr. Das Bild des "göttlichen Menschen" in Spätantike und Frühchristentum* (Vienna: Höfels, 1935–36); Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol. 1, trans. Kendrick Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 128–33; and Leander Keck, "Mark 3:7–12 and Mark's Christology," *JBL* 84 (1965): 341–58.

54 Theodore Weeden, "The Heresy That Necessitated Mark's Gospel," *ZNW* 59 (1968): 145–58. This article became the basis for Weeden's influential book *Mark: Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979).

55 See Skinner, "Study of Character(s)," 12.

56 The expression "corrective Christology" appears to have been coined by Jack Dean Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), while the phenomenon he describes can be traced back to various studies beginning in the late 1960s. Besides Weeden's work, see Norman Perrin, "Creative Use of the Son of Man Traditions by Mark," *USQR* 23 (1968): 357–65; Werner Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979).

57 Norman Perrin was especially influential in applying the conclusions reached by Weeden specifically to the different titles used of Jesus. Perrin asserted that Mark employed the

Christological studies,⁵⁸ even as the θεῖος ἀνὴρ argument has been rendered untenable by many scholars.⁵⁹

These discussions, employing form- and source-critical approaches, were often focused outside the text itself. Meanwhile, the narrative-critical approach has allowed the discussions regarding Jesus's identity to be centered on how the character Jesus is presented in the story world of Mark's Gospel. This approach has by no means dismissed prior discussions; in fact, the Christological titles of Mark have continued to be a major point of emphasis within narrative-critical studies. However, the scope of those discussions has shifted to what is internal (i.e., the narrative of the Gospel), as opposed to what is external (e.g., how to understand the title "son of God" in relation to how it presumably would have been understood in its Greco-Roman context).

Rhoads and Michie's *Mark as Story* served a pivotal role in encouraging the examination of characters in terms of their role within the narrative itself rather than for what they can tell us about the historical context or the *Sitz im Leben* of an early Christian community such as Mark's.⁶⁰ This focal shift to the story world of the text also served as a springboard for the detailed study of Markan characters other than the disciples, including the main character, or protagonist, Jesus.⁶¹

The second edition of *Mark as Story* (1999), by Rhoads and Michie along with Joanna Dewey, includes a significant expansion and revision of the section on characters, which shifted from a single chapter to two chapters. The authors take into account various insights which had emerged within narrative-critical studies during the intervening period since the first publication. As Elizabeth Struthers Malbon observes, one objective of these revisions was to take into greater account the relationship between narrative-critical and historical-critical analyses: "A consistent and timely feature of the second edition of *Mark as Story* is its more explicit reference to background information from

title "Son of Man" as a way of interpreting the titles "Christ" and "Son of God"; see, e.g., Perrin, "The Christology of Mark," pages 471–85 in M. Sabbe, ed., *L'Évangile selon Marc: Tradition et rédaction*, BETL 34 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1974).

58 Jacob Chacko Naluparayil, in his article "Jesus of the Gospel of Mark: Present State of Research," *CRBS* 8 (2000): 191–226, divides his analysis of research on the identity of Jesus in Mark along the lines of these two categories, demonstrating how the emphasis on these two Christological titles has had a profound effect on Markan studies.

59 Among the works that have been influential in critiquing the θεῖος ἀνὴρ proposal are Carl H. Holladay, *Theios Aner in Hellenistic Judaism: A Critique of the Use of This Category in New Testament Christology* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977); and Blackburn, *Theios Anēr*.

60 See Skinner, "Study of Character(s)," 23, 26.

61 Skinner, "Study of Character(s)," 25.

the historical, social, and political culture in interpreting the story—and especially in guiding readers away from misinterpreting the story.”⁶² Even so, Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie seek to maintain the notion that any study of characterization has to be conducted from within the story itself:

All we know of a given character is what we know from the story. We cannot go beyond what the Markan narrator has told us or implied in order to speculate about the character’s actions or motives—either on the basis of the treatment of that character in other Gospels or through efforts to reconstruct the historical character. We are treating these figures only in terms of their characterization in Mark—even when we are using helpful background information from the culture to understand the character better.⁶³

The balance between narrative and historical issues will be important for the present study, given its attentiveness both to Mark’s narrative and to comparative material from ancient Greco-Roman and Jewish literature.

Aside from the brief character study on Jesus included in *Mark as Story*, a number of narrative studies have subsequently been composed that focus upon the characterization of Jesus in Mark.⁶⁴ While the specific objectives, approaches, and conclusions of these studies vary, they are held together by the common thread of the narrative approach and the attempt to understand Jesus as he is portrayed in Mark.

62 Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, “Characters in Mark’s Story: Changing Perspectives on the Narrative Process,” in Kelly R. Iverson and Christopher W. Skinner, eds., *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 48. See also David Rhoads and Kari Syreeni, eds., *Characterization in the Gospels: Reconceiving Narrative Criticism*, JSNTSup 184 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999). This compilation of articles seeks to provide a closer connection between narrative criticism and the more traditional historical approaches, largely through an increased focus on author as a response to the reader-oriented emphases that are prevalent within narrative criticism.

63 Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story*, 2nd ed., 98; also cited in Malbon, “Changing Perspectives,” 48.

64 E.g., Jack Dean Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark’s Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983); Edwin K. Broadhead, *Teaching with Authority: Miracles and Christology in the Gospel of Mark*, JSNTSup 74 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992); Ole Davidssen, *The Narrative Jesus: A Semiotic Reading of Mark’s Gospel* (Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 1993); Jacob Chacko Naluparayil, *The Identity of Jesus in Mark: An Essay on Narrative Christology*, Studium Franciscanum Analecta 49 (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 2000); Paul L. Danove, *The Rhetoric of the Characterization of God, Jesus, and Jesus’ Disciples in the Gospel of Mark*, JSNTSup 290 (New York: T&T Clark, 2005).

Of all those who have contributed to an understanding of the characterization of Jesus through a narrative approach, perhaps no one has been as influential as Elizabeth Struthers Malbon.⁶⁵ She has published widely on the topic and has done work on many different characters that appear in Mark, including women, the disciples, the crowds, and the Jewish leaders, as well as a number of minor characters, such as the poor widow of 12:41–44.⁶⁶ Malbon then turned her attention to examining the main Markan character, Jesus. After composing a number of essays on the characterization of Jesus,⁶⁷ Malbon's work on the central figure of the Gospel culminated in her 2009 book, *Mark's Jesus: Characterization as Narrative Christology*.⁶⁸ In this work, Malbon seeks to distance the characterization of Jesus from the discussion of Christological titles, which, in her view, is an association that tends toward "the imposition of theological categories onto the characterization of Jesus in the narrative of Mark."⁶⁹ Labeling her approach as "narrative Christology," Malbon seeks to "follow the cues of the Markan narrative," allowing the *how* of the story's presentation of Jesus to guide the understanding of characterization.⁷⁰

The main distinguishing feature of Malbon's approach to the characterization of Jesus is the distinction she draws between the point of view of the narrator and the point of view of the Markan Jesus himself. Malbon's observation is that the Markan Jesus deflects attention away from himself and toward God, while the narrator directs attention to Jesus. Malbon concludes that the implied author, who is distinct from the narrator, has intentionally created this tension within the narrative so that the implied audience can "see the story of

65 Regarding Malbon's work, Skinner, "Study of Character(s)," 28, says, "It is safe to say that her publications are generally regarded as required reading for anyone wishing to become conversant with the foundational issues in Markan character studies."

66 For a compilation of Malbon's work on many of these Markan characters, see Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *In the Company of Jesus: Characters in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2000).

67 E.g., "The Christology of Mark's Gospel: Narrative Christology and the Markan Jesus," in Mark Allan Powell and David R. Bauer, eds., *Who Do You Say That I Am? Essays on Christology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 33–48; "Reflected Christology: An Aspect of Narrative 'Christology' in the Gospel of Mark," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 26 (1999): 127–45; "Markan Narrative Christology and the Kingdom of God," in Sharon H. Ringe and H.C. Paul Kim, eds., *Literary Encounters with the Reign of God*, Festschrift Robert C. Tannehill (New York: T&T Clark, 2004).

68 Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *Mark's Jesus: Characterization as Narrative Christology* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009).

69 Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 16.

70 Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 16–17.

Jesus in its full spectral colors of commitment to God and God's rule, to hear of the story of Jesus in its full complexity and mystery."⁷¹

Before concluding this appraisal of works pertaining to the characterization of Jesus in Mark and discussing the role of emotions in these works, a couple of other recent studies should be noted. While these two works are not considered narrative-critical studies, they are nevertheless concerned with the depiction of Jesus's character traits as conveyed in the Gospel of Mark. Importantly for our purposes, both works provide an example of treatments of the portrayal of Jesus that exist outside the specialized focus of narrative-critical studies. This allows us to get an idea of whether the attentiveness (or inattentiveness) of emotions is isolated to a particular stream of scholarship engaged in studying the character Jesus.

Wendy Cotter's book *The Christ of the Miracle Stories: Portrait through Encounter* (2010) is pertinent to the present discussion not only because of its focus upon how Jesus is characterized in Mark but also because of its particular emphasis on the miracle accounts. In this work, Cotter underscores the importance of the details that are included in the encounters between Jesus and petitioners seeking healing. She argues that there is significance in *how* Jesus is portrayed in these stories, suggesting that the survival of such details in the transmission of the Gospel betrays their significance. While Cotter largely focuses on distinguishing between source material and Markan redaction, her emphasis on the *how* of Jesus's portrayal, which echoes Malbon's emphasis on "how the story means,"⁷² assigns an importance to certain details of the narrative (in this case the miracle stories) that are often overlooked. Cotter's treatment of miracle stories is selective. She discusses two of the stories from Mark that include the use of *σπλαγχνίζομαι*, but aside from a brief discussion of the text-critical issue at Mark 1:41,⁷³ she offers little analysis regarding the term.⁷⁴ Her emphasis instead falls on the miracle stories' portrayal of Jesus's *φιλανθρωπία, πραότης*, and *ἐπιείκεια*, virtues that are not explicitly connected to the miracle stories of Jesus but are perceived by Cotter as foundational to Jesus's attitudes and actions as seen in the miracle stories.⁷⁵

In 2016, J. R. Daniel Kirk published *A Man Attested by God: The Human Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels*, in which he argues that the Synoptic Jesus fits into

71 Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 210.

72 See, e.g., Malbon, *In the Company of Jesus*, 1–2.

73 Cotter, *Christ of the Miracle Stories*, 38.

74 In her examination of Mark 9:14–29, Cotter, *Christ of the Miracle Stories*, 183, refers to the use of the verb *σπλαγχνίζομαι* in 9:22, noting that its usage is rare in the literature of the period.

75 See Cotter, *Christ of the Miracle Stories*, 253–57.

the category of an “idealized human figure.”⁷⁶ Kirk contends that, too often, attempts have been made to uncover a divine Christology in the Synoptics, at the expense of the main feature of the Gospels’ presentation, namely, that Jesus is presented as “the Human One who fulfills humanity’s purpose, enters into primal humanity’s physical, God-reflecting glory, and calls his followers into the way of being human that they see on display in him.”⁷⁷ Kirk presents plentiful evidence for this category of idealized human figure within the Hebrew Scriptures as well as post-biblical Judaism.⁷⁸ As part of his attempt to place the Jesus of the Synoptics squarely within this category, Kirk has a lengthy chapter on Jesus’s miraculous activity. Kirk’s assertion here is that even in this area, in which the claim for a divine Christology is seemingly the most readily arguable, the miraculous activity of Jesus fits well within the scope of what can be expected of an idealized human figure who is empowered by the spirit of God. Interestingly, while Kirk emphasizes that the fully human portrait of the Synoptic Jesus allows his followers to identify readily with him and to participate in the restorative work of God on earth—a work that is on display in Jesus’s miraculous activity—Kirk makes no reference in that discussion to the portrayal of Jesus’s compassion, in spite of its repeated appearance in the miracle accounts.⁷⁹

In all these works on Jesus’s characterization in Mark, the depiction of Jesus’s emotions seldom enters the discussion. Even though narrative-critical approaches are concerned with underscoring the presentation of Jesus in the story of Mark’s Gospel, the frequent allusions to Jesus’s emotions in the miracle stories are virtually ignored. For example, in his 636-page narrative study, *The Identity of Jesus in Mark*, Jacob Chacko Naluparayil has a meager four pages on the miracles of Jesus, a brief discussion which argues that the inclusion of such stories demonstrate “Jesus’ character trait of divine salvific mercy.”⁸⁰ The

76 Kirk defines this category thus: “non-angelic, non-preexistent human beings, of the past, present, or anticipated future, who are depicted in textual or other artifacts as playing some unique role in representing God to the rest of the created realm, or in representing some aspect of the created realm before God” (*Man Attested by God*, 3).

77 Kirk, *Man Attested by God*, 579.

78 Kirk, *Man Attested by God*, 44–176.

79 Kirk, *Man Attested by God*, 528, makes a passing mention of Jesus’s compassion in relation to Matthew 9:36 and Mark 6:34—not actually within his chapter on miracles—but his focus there is on the allusion to the Hebrew Scriptures regarding the people being like sheep without a shepherd. He offers no expansion on why the Synoptics include the depiction of Jesus’s emotional state or how that might feature into an emphasis on Jesus’s humanity.

80 Naluparayil, *Identity of Jesus*, 536. One paragraph within Naluparayil’s treatment highlights the depiction of Jesus’s compassion in the miracle stories, but he simply offers a

extremely detailed narrative analysis of Ole Davidsen, *The Narrative Jesus*, does offer a section on Jesus as wonder-worker encompassing 45 pages.⁸¹ Davidsen focuses on the roles of Jesus that are on display in the Markan narrative (in the case of the miracle stories, primarily his role as Protector), and he spends a significant amount of his discussion critiquing Gerd Theissen's analysis of motifs within the miracle-story genre. Davidsen offers little comment on specific miracle stories, and the emotions of Jesus play no part in his discussion. Malbon, who identifies her work in relation to the studies of Naluparayil and Davidsen as "more exegetical than theoretical,"⁸² bases her investigation of the characterization of Jesus in Mark on the notion that "characters are known by what they say and by what they do and by what others (the narrator and other characters) say and do to, about, or in relation to them."⁸³ Yet, even though the portrayal of Jesus's emotions emerges somewhat frequently in the Markan narrative, Malbon offers virtually no treatment on the topic in her work.⁸⁴ These examples, along with the aforementioned work of Kirk on the humanity of Jesus and Cotter's treatment of the portrayal of Jesus in the miracle stories, present a picture of a largely neglected element of the characterization of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark.

4 Emotions and the Bible

As we have seen in the last two sections, even though the miracle stories of Mark contain frequent references—and in the case of *σπλαγχνίζομαι*, repeated references—to the emotions of Jesus, neither miracle studies nor character studies have given much attention to the depiction of Jesus's emotions in Mark. Now, we turn to look at the burgeoning field of emotion studies and the Bible. Unlike the field of miracle studies, which has an extensive and rich history in modern biblical scholarship, the study of emotions and the Bible has seldom been the focus of scholarly work, though, as we will see, a shift seems now to be underway.

list of the passages in which such depictions occur, offering no further exposition of the examples given. His supposition that the miracles show the trait of "divine salvific mercy" is essentially taken as the conclusion that follows from the passages cited.

81 Davidsen, *Narrative Jesus*, 57–101.

82 Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 13.

83 Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 14.

84 The 258-page work contains little more than a single paragraph on the portrayal of Jesus's emotions, and Malbon does not move beyond mere observation regarding the emotions (see Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 66–68).

Early in the twentieth century, B. B. Warfield published a treatise on the emotions of Jesus.⁸⁵ This treatise claims to be a “starting point” for the discussion of Jesus’s emotional life.⁸⁶ Warfield seeks to repudiate the image of a Stoic-like Jesus who did not experience emotions as we do, a natural byproduct of an overly divinized understanding of Jesus that neglects his humanity. Warfield provides a brief analysis of the portrayal of Jesus’s emotions in the Gospels, emphasizing especially compassion and anger. His treatment of compassion centers on the term *σπλαγχνίζω*, and his analysis often points to the appearance of this term in individual miracle stories, though he also focuses on the connection of the term with the spiritual destitution of the people whom Jesus encountered, thus drawing upon the use of the term in general statements, that is, without the specific context of a miracle (e.g., Matt 9:36). The concluding reflections of Warfield are theological in nature and focus on the idea that the emotions attributed to Jesus serve the function of indicating his humanness.⁸⁷

For most of the next hundred years, the topic of Jesus’s emotions was virtually ignored.⁸⁸ That has changed in recent years. For example, a collection of essays on the topic from the fledgling “Bible and Emotions” group of the Society of Biblical Literature was compiled in 2017 by F. Scott Spencer.⁸⁹ Additionally, in 2016, the journal *Biblical Interpretation* published an entire issue on the topic of emotions and the Bible,⁹⁰ stemming from a research group within the European Association of Biblical Studies.⁹¹ What follows here is a brief survey of recent works on the topic of the Bible and emotions, including some of the essays that appear in these two volumes.

85 B. B. Warfield, “On the Emotional Life of Our Lord,” *Biblical and Theological Studies by the Members of the Faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1912): 35–90.

86 Warfield, “On the Emotional Life,” 40.

87 E.g., Warfield, “On the Emotional Life,” 84, says, “Nothing is lacking to make the impression strong that we have before us in Jesus a human being like ourselves.”

88 Robert Law published a treatise on Jesus’s emotions three years after Warfield’s essay (*The Emotions of Jesus* [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1915]). While Law does discuss the appearance of emotions in relation to Jesus’s healing activity, the work is devotional in nature and does not explore historical, cultural, or linguistic issues.

89 F. Scott Spencer, ed., *Mixed Feelings and Vexed Passions: Exploring Emotions in Biblical Literature* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017).

90 See the introduction to this issue by Françoise Mirguet and Dominika Kurek-Chomycz (“Introduction: Emotions in Ancient Jewish Literature,” *BibInt* 24 [2016]: 435–41).

91 This history is outlined in Mirguet and Kurek-Chomycz, “Introduction,” 440.

In 2004, Paul Kruger remarked that “the subject of emotion has not been a very popular theme among Old Testament scholars,”⁹² referring elsewhere to “the mostly unexplored field of emotions in the Old Testament.”⁹³ Kruger regards this paucity as the product of a common viewpoint that links emotions with irrationality, a viewpoint which has been frequently challenged in recent studies.⁹⁴ In his essay, Kruger provides an example of the insights that can be gained from deliberating on the topic of emotions, focusing on a selection of expressions of shame, guilt, depression, anger, and fear in the Old Testament.

Matthew Elliott’s 2006 work entitled *Faithful Feelings* addresses the topic of emotions in the New Testament.⁹⁵ After providing a helpful synopsis of modern-day philosophical discussions on non-cognitive and cognitive theories of emotion, Elliott examines understandings of emotion in the Greco-Roman world and within Jewish contexts. With this background, he then offers an analysis of a number of emotions that appear in the New Testament: love, joy, hope, jealousy, fear, sorrow, and anger. Elliott’s work covers the whole New Testament, though he does not explore in detail the portrayal of Jesus’s emotions in the Gospel accounts, nor does he underscore the frequency of emotion language in the miracle accounts. Nonetheless, Elliott offers a helpful overview of emotions and insights into how emotions may have been understood in first-century contexts.

In 2007, Matthew Schlimm published an article, “Different Perspectives on Divine Pathos: An Examination of Hermeneutics in Biblical Theology.”⁹⁶ In this article, Schlimm seeks to compare the views of Abraham Heschel, Terence Fretheim, and Walter Brueggemann regarding God’s experience of pathos. As Schlimm points out, all three argue that God is emotionally involved with creation,⁹⁷ though they describe that involvement in diverse ways, largely determined by their distinct understandings of God’s (im)mutability. Schlimm does not provide a detailed examination of specific biblical passages in which emotion language occurs, but he recognizes that such work is scarce. Here,

92 Paul A. Kruger, “On Emotions and the Expression of Emotions in the Old Testament: A Few Introductory Remarks,” *BZ* 48 (2004): 213.

93 Kruger, “On Emotions,” 228.

94 Kruger, “On Emotions,” 214–15. Though not mentioned by Kruger, Martha Nussbaum, in her highly influential work *Upheavals of Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), makes a compelling case for the presence of cognitive elements in human emotions (see especially pp. 19–88).

95 Matthew A. Elliott, *Faithful Feelings: Rethinking Emotion in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006).

96 Matthew R. Schlimm, “Different Perspectives on Divine Pathos: An Examination of Hermeneutics in Biblical Theology,” *CBQ* 69 (2007): 673–94.

97 Schlimm, “Different Perspectives,” 674–75.

he quotes Kruger: "The subject of emotions in the Hebrew Bible is a most neglected theme and deserves an extensive treatment."⁹⁸

In the same year (2007), Robert C. Roberts produced a "Christian psychology of emotions."⁹⁹ Drawing from his areas of expertise (philosophy, moral psychology, and ethics), Roberts seeks to provide a framework in which emotions may serve a more prominent role within theological reflection and the description of spiritual life. Roberts appeals to biblical texts with some frequency in his section on "Christian emotion-virtues."¹⁰⁰ However, it is not his primary objective to offer a significant contribution to the field of biblical studies. Nonetheless, he contributes to a theological understanding of emotion, and both his definition of emotion and his chapter on compassion will prove insightful for the present study, especially when discussing ancient concepts of emotion and the use of modern emotion terms.

The aforementioned 2016 issue of *Biblical Interpretation* contains a series of articles on the topic of emotions and the Bible. It includes a general essay on how emotions are expressed in the Hebrew Bible,¹⁰¹ an essay on methodological issues related to discussing emotions and the New Testament,¹⁰² a treatment of the relationship between genre and emotions,¹⁰³ and two articles that focus on aspects of particular texts (Ezra¹⁰⁴ and the Dead Sea Scrolls¹⁰⁵). These essays provide a glimpse into the fresh and exciting work on emotions and the Bible.

98 Schlimm, "Different Perspectives," 693n97, quoting Paul A. Kruger, "A Cognitive Interpretation of the Emotion of Anger in the Hebrew Bible," *JNSL* 26 (2000): 181.

99 Robert C. Roberts, *Spiritual Emotions: A Psychology of Christian Virtues* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007). For the self-descriptive phrase "a Christian psychology of emotions," see p. 19.

100 The *virtue* language employed by Roberts here reflects his viewpoint that emotions are "concern-based construals" and that certain concerns stem from a person's passions, which are themselves character traits. As such, for Roberts, the emotions related to those concerns are expressions of that person's character. See Roberts, *Spiritual Emotions*, 17–22.

101 Françoise Mirguet, "What is an 'Emotion' in the Hebrew Bible?: An Experience that Exceeds Most Contemporary Concepts," *BibInt* 24 (2016): 442–56.

102 Anke Inselmann, "Emotions and Passions in the New Testament: Methodological Issues," *BibInt* 24 (2016): 536–54.

103 Petra von Gemünden, "Emotions and Literary Genres in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and the New Testament: A Contribution to Form History and Historical Psychology," *BibInt* 24 (2016): 514–35.

104 Angela Kim Harkins, "The Pro-Social Role of Grief in Ezra's Penitential Prayer," *BibInt* (2016): 466–91.

105 Ari Mermelstein, "Emotional Regimes, Ritual Practice, and the Shaping of Sectarian Identity: The Experience of Ablutions in the Dead Sea Scrolls," *BibInt* 24 (2016): 492–513.

Françoise Mirguet has become a prominent figure within the relatively nascent field of emotions and the Bible. Her recent work on compassion¹⁰⁶ has provided a rare and notable example of a major study on a single category of emotion.¹⁰⁷ Mirguet examines a wide variety of Judeo-Hellenistic texts, with the objective of ascertaining how those texts present emotional responses to the pain of others. She demonstrates how these texts fit within the larger literary environment in which they arise by employing common terminology and ideas, while they also adapt such notions to serve distinct purposes. For Mirguet, the distinctiveness found within Judeo-Hellenistic texts in how they employ the language of compassion generally serves the purpose of reconstructing identity and social standing. That is, compassion proves useful both for individuals in affirming or creating power dynamics within relationships and for Jewish society in general as a minority culture seeking to reimagine itself within the dominant society.¹⁰⁸ As the present study unfolds, we will have numerous opportunities to interact with Mirguet's work and examine whether the assertions of her study can be applied to the use of compassion language in relation to the Markan Jesus.

Stephen Voorwinde has produced two volumes on the topic of Jesus's emotions.¹⁰⁹ Voorwinde provides what was, at the time, an unparalleled look at the portrayal of Jesus's emotions in the Gospel accounts, offering a brief contextual treatment of each occurrence of emotion language in the texts. Voorwinde demonstrates that a high concentration of such language is associated either with the miracle stories or with the passion narratives.¹¹⁰ Since Voorwinde is attempting to provide a survey of each instance of emotion language, his treatment of individual passages is necessarily brief, yet his evaluation has the cumulative effect of exhibiting the potential fruitfulness of attending to the topic generally, and to the individual examples specifically.

106 Françoise Mirguet, *An Early History of Compassion: Emotion and Imagination in Hellenistic Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

107 I say "category of emotion" here because Mirguet's treatment of compassion encompasses several different Greek terms (ὀίκτος, ἔλεος, συμπάθεια, and σπλάγχνα) that convey similar but distinct notions ("pity," "mercy," "sympathy," and "compassion"). In fact, Mirguet refers to "pity" perhaps as often as "compassion" and often uses the phrasing "emotional responses to others' pain," which lends itself to a somewhat broader scope than the book's title might suggest.

108 For the former notion, see especially chapters two and three of Mirguet's book; for the latter notion, see especially chapter five.

109 Stephen Voorwinde, *Jesus' Emotions in the Fourth Gospel: Human or Divine?* Library of New Testament Studies (London: T&T Clark, 2005); *Jesus' Emotions in the Gospels* (London: T&T Clark, 2011).

110 See, e.g., Voorwinde, *Jesus' Emotions in the Gospels*, 10–11.

Aside from providing an overview of each of these usages of emotion language in the Gospels, Voorwinde's objective is to differentiate between the depictions of Jesus that point to his divine nature and those which emphasize his human nature.¹¹¹ He argues that the portrayals of Jesus's emotions do not merely convey his humanity¹¹² but, at least in some cases, are a reflection of the way God is elsewhere characterized—thus pointing to Jesus's divinity.¹¹³

Kelly Lynn Anderson completed a dissertation in 2020 titled "The Emotions of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark" through the Catholic University of America.¹¹⁴ Anderson begins by discussing theories of emotion, then offers a narrative analysis of each section of Mark's Gospel, examining in each section the use of emotion terms. She thus provides a necessarily brief treatment of each instance of Jesus's emotional portrayal in Mark.¹¹⁵ In addition to being broader in scope with regard to her treatment of emotions in Mark compared to the present study, Anderson's work emphasizes the narrative structure of Mark more so than characterization. Anderson discusses the emotions that appear in the miracle stories of Mark, but unlike the present study, she does not discuss the portrayal of Jesus's emotions in relation to any other figures from the ancient world.

In 2021, F. Scott Spencer published a work on the emotions of Jesus in the Gospels.¹¹⁶ Spencer begins with a discussion of emotion theory and a treatment of the theological issue of divine impassibility.¹¹⁷ He then discusses the Gospels' portrayals of Jesus's emotions, first analyzing the "vehement" emotions (mainly anger, anguish, and disgust),¹¹⁸ then turning to examine Jesus's "positive" emotions (mainly amazement, compassion, and joy).¹¹⁹ Spencer addresses the appearance of *σπλαγχνίζομαι* in the miracle stories, but like Voorwinde's book on Jesus's emotions in the Gospels, his work is broader in scope compared to the present work, as he is dealing with the portrayal of emotions from all four Gospel accounts. Nonetheless, Spencer provides many

111 See Voorwinde, *Jesus' Emotions in the Fourth Gospel*, 5–13.

112 Cf. the discussion of Kirk's *Man Attested by God* in §3 of the present chapter.

113 See e.g., Voorwinde, *Jesus's Emotions in the Fourth Gospel*, 61–62, 266–70.

114 Kelly Lynn Anderson, "The Emotions of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark," PhD diss., Catholic University of America, 2020; available from ProQuest LLC [27960499].

115 For Anderson, this includes twenty-three instances of emotion terms. The main difference between Anderson's enumeration and that of the present work, which identifies sixteen occurrences of emotion terms, is her inclusion of *θέλω*.

116 F. Scott Spencer, *Passions of the Christ: The Emotional Life of Jesus in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021).

117 Spencer, *Passions*, 1–38.

118 Spencer, *Passions*, 39–143.

119 Spencer, *Passions*, 145–260.

insights that will prove useful in our discussion of the use of *σπλαγχνίζομαι* in Mark.¹²⁰

The present study thus provides a unique contribution within this burgeoning field of emotion studies and the Bible in its detailed treatment of a specific emotional portrayal (*σπλαγχνίζομαι*) within a particular narrative work (Mark's Gospel) and in its discussion of how that portrayal contributes to the characterization of Jesus within that narrative.

5 Methodological Points

Before we turn to the examination of miracle stories in the ancient world, a few more details regarding methodology must be noted. While the trajectory and objectives of this study were outlined at the beginning of the chapter, some additional points of clarification regarding our approach to analyzing the ancient texts will likely be helpful.

First, as suggested by the aforementioned emphasis on characterization, both in the project's outline and in the survey of pertinent literature, the present study will employ narrative criticism in its analysis of Mark's Gospel. It will not be engaging with the form-, source-, and redaction-critical discussions surrounding the proposed development of the miracle stories in Mark. Neither will this study deliberate on any potential relationship between its findings and historical Jesus studies. Rather, the focus is on the narrative elements themselves and the narrative of the Gospel of Mark as a whole.

Second, regarding the miracle stories of ancient Greco-Roman and Jewish literature that will be discussed in chapters 2 and 3, the attempt will be made to provide at least some context rather than simply providing statistical information on the use of specific terms. The ability to analyze context will necessarily vary based upon the sources involved, as we will be dealing not only with stories that are situated within narrative material but also with stories in which little or no context is supplied (e.g., inscriptions found at religious centers). But wherever possible, the miracle stories and pertinent emotion language discussed will be situated within their larger narratives.

¹²⁰ In late 2022, after research for the present work was complete, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht published a work on the Bible and emotions in their *Biblisch-Theologische Studien* series (Nils Neumann and Anna-Lena Senk [Hg.], eds. *Emotionen in der Bibel und ihrer Welt*, *Biblisch-Theologische Studien* 192 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2022]) that offers a collection of essays on the use of emotions (including love, happiness, and fear) in biblical texts.

Lastly, given the importance of being thorough in assessing ancient miracle stories—so as to demonstrate whether Mark’s portrayal of the miracle worker Jesus was exceptional—it is worth noting how the miracle stories examined in chapters 2 and 3 were selected. Two particular works served as a starting point for identifying ancient Greco-Roman miracle stories: the sourcebook on miracle stories written by Wendy Cotter and the analysis of ancient miracle workers by Barry Blackburn. For Jewish miracle stories, the work of Eric Eve proved invaluable. Rather than having to start from scratch, these works afforded the opportunity to do targeted research on miracle workers and texts. Additionally, extensive research was conducted using the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG) to identify Greek emotion terms in these miracle stories. This also included targeted research on certain terms on TLG (e.g., ἔλεέω, οἰκτῖρω, σπλάγχνα and cognates) to ensure that any usage of these terms pertinent to the project would not be missed. Finally, for certain texts deemed particularly valuable to the project—either because they were most proximate to Mark or because they were likely known in Mark’s world—the content was examined in its entirety to see how emotion terms were used throughout and to get an idea of how characters were portrayed in the larger narratives.¹²¹

Having situated the present study at the intersection of miracle studies, character studies, and emotion studies and having identified that the analysis of emotions in relation to miracle stories and character studies is an area of study that has not received attention, we may set forth the notion that what follows will offer a helpful and unique contribution to biblical scholarship. Let us turn first to the analysis of emotional portrayal among miracle workers in ancient Greco-Roman literature.

¹²¹ Examples of texts examined in their entirety include the Homeric epics, Josephus’s *Antiquities*, Philo’s *On the Life of Moses*, and most Jewish texts of the late Hellenistic period. Additional material on certain miracle-working figures including Asclepius, Isis, and Heracles was also sought and examined.

Miracle Workers and Emotion in Ancient Greco-Roman Literature

1 Emotions in Ancient Literature

Emotions have been the subject of many studies in recent decades, across numerous disciplines, including psychology, anthropology, neuroscience, history, and philosophy.¹ The difficulty in defining the term *emotion* is demonstrated by the varying ways it is described in the different disciplines.² Anthropologists, for example, tend to emphasize social dynamics in their understanding of emotions, while neuroscientists highlight chemical changes that occur in the brain.³ Psychologists often perceive emotions as an awareness of some bodily sensation, while philosophers and historians frequently appeal to ancient discussions regarding emotions, such as those of the Stoics.⁴ According to Anna Wierzbicka, a specialist in linguistics, the English word emotion “combines in its meaning a reference to ‘feeling,’ a reference to ‘thinking,’ and a reference to a person’s body.”⁵ These three components emerge in varying degrees in the diverse disciplines concerned with understanding emotion. Much of the discussion of emotions in recent years has focused on whether emotions have a cognitive component. Traditional, non-cognitive approaches to emotion have been challenged by a number of influential works that assert elements of evaluation, appraisal, or judgment in emotion.⁶ Yet, non-cognitive theories of

1 See Roberts, *Spiritual Emotions*, 7, who includes examples from each of these disciplines.

2 Inselmann, “Emotions and Passions,” 538, refers to a 1981 study that analyzes ninety different English definitions of emotion (P. R. Kleinginna Jr. and A. M. Kleinginna, “A Categorized List of Emotion Definitions, with Suggestions for a Consensual Definition,” in *Motivation and Emotion* 5.4 [1981], 345–79).

3 Roberts, *Spiritual Emotions*, 8.

4 Roberts, *Spiritual Emotions*, 9.

5 Anna Wierzbicka, *Emotions Across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Universals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 2.

6 See especially Richard S. Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Robert C. Solomon, *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993); Antonio R. Damasio, *Descartes’ Error: Emotion Reason and the Human Brain* (New York: Avon, 1994); Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*.

emotion continue to be advanced.⁷ Are emotions simply “impulses that have no connection with our thoughts”? Or are they “suffused with intelligence and discernment”? These questions, which introduce Martha Nussbaum’s seminal philosophical work on emotions,⁸ constitute the sides of the current debate.

The impediments to arriving at an agreed-upon definition of the English word *emotion*, the divergent perspectives regarding what is included in the notion of “emotion” (particularly, the level of cognition involved), and recent developments in neuroscience present a formidable challenge to our ability to analyze ancient concepts of emotion. The idea that the experience of emotions is universal across cultures has been challenged.⁹ Even the term *emotion*, Wierzbicka suggests, does not have a correlate term in many languages today.¹⁰ When we add the element of a time gap, the difficulties only increase. Did people in the ancient world experience emotions in a way similar to us? If so, what language did they use to speak of such experiences?

Scholars who have dealt with the topic of emotions in the Bible have answered these questions in varying ways. Some are more optimistic than others about being able to employ modern concepts of emotion to biblical texts. Two works on Jesus’s emotions by Stephen Voorwinde take for granted our ability to use both the term *emotion* and the various words for specific emotions that arise in the Gospel accounts (e.g., the words for “anger,” “compassion,” or “amazement”).¹¹ Voorwinde makes no mention of the potential difficulties inherent in using modern categories to describe ancient notions of emotion.¹²

Matthew Elliott, who discusses the meaning of the term *emotion* and provides a summary of non-cognitive and cognitive theories of emotion, argues

7 See, e.g., Jesse J. Prinz, *Gut Reactions: A Perceptual Theory of Emotion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Jenefer Robinson, *Deeper than Reason: Emotion and its Role in Literature, Music, and Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

8 Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 1.

9 See, e.g., Catherine A. Lutz, *Unnatural Emotions: Everyday Sentiments on a Micronesian Atoll and Their Challenge to Western Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988). See also Wierzbicka, *Emotions Across Languages*, 168–215, who contends that facial expressions, often considered a universal marker of certain emotions, can vary across cultures.

10 Wierzbicka, *Emotions Across Languages*, 3. She points to German, Russian, and Samoan as examples of languages that do not have a term that equates with emotion.

11 Voorwinde, *Jesus’ Emotions in the Fourth Gospel*; Voorwinde, *Jesus’ Emotions in the Gospels*.

12 This unqualified use of emotion language with regard to ancient texts is not exclusive to biblical scholars. In two edited volumes on Greco-Roman emotions (Angelos Chaniotis, ed., *Unveiling Emotions: Sources and Methods for the Study of Emotions in the Greek World* [Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2012]; Angelos Chaniotis and Pierre Ducrey, eds., *Unveiling Emotions II. Emotions in Greece and Rome: Texts, Images, Material Culture* [Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2013]), the topic of emotions is introduced without any linguistic qualification.

that the modern biblical scholar can appropriately employ modern categories and concepts of emotion when analyzing biblical texts.¹³ He contends, “The origin of the ideas expressed in the words cognitive and non-cognitive are ancient. The words themselves give us modern terminology we can use to frame the debate.”¹⁴ He goes on to say, “Using the terms cognitive and non-cognitive will allow us to understand the arguments of ... Jesus himself in the language of the psychology and philosophy of our own day.”¹⁵ Elliott offers an intriguing discussion that attempts to demonstrate how the debates regarding the role of cognition in emotion were present in the ancient world.¹⁶ Yet, he may be overly optimistic in claiming an unqualified use of modern notions to understand emotions in the New Testament.

Other scholars who treat emotions and the Bible exercise greater caution in utilizing modern categories, concepts, and terms for emotions when discussing biblical texts. Matthew Schlimm contends that our modern conceptions of emotion can color our interpretation of biblical emotions.¹⁷ He states, “Interpreters should not automatically assume that biblical writers conceived of emotions the same way people do today.”¹⁸ Similarly, Anke Inselmann argues that our attempts to analyze emotions in ancient texts are complicated by our separation from the world of these texts and also by lexical variation.¹⁹

In an article on emotion in the Hebrew Bible, Françoise Mirguet argues that our contemporary understanding of emotion does not have a direct correspondence in biblical Hebrew.²⁰ Hebrew terms that carry what we would consider an emotional connotation include more than what we typically think of as emotion. These terms include “actions, movements, ritual gestures, and physical sensations, without strict dissociation among these different dimensions,”

13 Elliott, *Faithful Feelings*, 14.

14 Elliott, *Faithful Feelings*, 18.

15 Elliott, *Faithful Feelings*, 19.

16 Elliott, *Faithful Feelings*, 56–79.

17 Matthew Richard Schlimm, “The Central Role of Emotions in Biblical Theology, Biblical Ethics, and Popular Conceptions of the Bible,” in *Mixed Feelings and Vexed Passions: Exploring Emotions in Biblical Literature*, ed. F. Scott Spencer (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017), 57.

18 Schlimm, “Central Role of Emotions,” 57. Here, Schlimm uses the example of jealousy, which today “is loaded with negative connotations.” In the Hebrew Bible, jealousy is more neutral, an “ordinary reaction” to “the perception that someone has something that they should not legitimately possess.” As such, God can feel jealous when the worship he alone should receive goes to other gods instead.

19 Inselmann, “Methodological Issues,” 538–39, 546. Inselmann points out that even in the present, the English word *passion* and the German word *Passion* have different connotations.

20 Mirguet, “‘Emotion’ in the Hebrew Bible,” 455.

while contemporary English tends to separate these categories.²¹ Mirguet demonstrates this point by analyzing several Hebrew terms frequently translated with words that we often classify as emotions (אהבה, “love”; שנאה, “hate”; יראת, “fear”) and shows how each of these terms carries a fuller, more multifaceted meaning in their biblical contexts. Her conclusion is that “when we study ‘emotions’ in the Hebrew Bible ... we should keep in mind that we are separating a realm of experience that is unlikely to have been distinguished and, in any case, is not named as such in our sources.”²²

Do these cautions about employing modern emotion terms and concepts to the Hebrew Bible apply equally as well to ancient Greek texts? It would seem that perhaps the Greek term πάθος may correspond reasonably well to our English word *emotion*. And there are ancient lists of the πάθη which contain terms that carry similar notions to what we would generally classify as emotions.²³ For example, Aristotle includes in his lists of πάθη the terms ὀργή (“anger”),²⁴ ἔλεος (“pity”), φόβος (“fear”), ἐπιθυμία (“desire”), θράσος (“confidence”), φθόνος (“envy”), χαρά (“joy”), φιλία (“love”), μῖσος (“hatred”), πόθος (“longing”), ζήλος (“jealousy”), πραότης (“gentleness”), and θάρσος (“courage”).²⁵

Even so, David Konstan cautions that “there is not always a perfect overlap between the Greek and English emotional vocabularies.”²⁶ He points to the example of φιλία, which corresponds not only to the English word “love” but also “friendship,” two notions which are typically separated in English parlance.²⁷ Konstan argues that the differences that emerge between these ancient Greek emotion terms and their English counterparts are the result of disparate social worlds.²⁸ The Greeks, according to Konstan, were always cognizant of their social position.²⁹ In this context of competition, emotions were responses to actions “that entail consequences for one’s own or others’ relative social standing.”³⁰ This meant that “classical representations and analyses of the emotions would have stressed the interaction or interdependency of

21 Mirguet, “‘Emotion’ in the Hebrew Bible,” 443.

22 Mirguet, “‘Emotion’ in the Hebrew Bible,” 465.

23 David Konstan, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 4.

24 Instead of ὀργή, *On the Soul* 403a17 has θυμός.

25 Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 2.1, 1378a20–23; *Nicomachean Ethics* 1105b21ff; *On the Soul* 403a16–17.

26 Konstan, *Emotions of the Ancient Greeks*, 4. Konstan also notes that the word πάθος itself, which is related to the verb πάσχω, meaning “suffer” or “experience,” has the more general meaning of “what befalls a person” (*Emotions of the Ancient Greeks*, 3–4).

27 Konstan, *Emotions of the Ancient Greeks*, 4.

28 Konstan, *Emotions of the Ancient Greeks*, 5.

29 Konstan, *Emotions of the Ancient Greeks*, 259.

30 Konstan, *Emotions of the Ancient Greeks*, 40.

emotional responses, and focused as well on the attitudes, motives, and actions of others rather than on chance, mechanical, or natural events as the causes or elicitors of emotion.”³¹ This association of emotion with belief and judgment in relation to social standing explains why Aristotle’s most thorough treatment on the *πάθη* comes in his *Rhetoric*, a treatise on the art of persuasion.³²

Despite these cautions given by Hebrew Bible scholars and classicists such as Konstan, there remains a recognition of the practical utility of the term *emotion* and individual words for particular emotions (e.g., love, anger, and fear) when discussing ancient texts. Hence the works on emotions just discussed each continue to employ the term *emotion* in their own discussions of ancient texts, despite its recognized limitations. The prevalence of the use of *emotion* and specific emotion terms in scholarly works, combined with an awareness that at least some correspondence does exist across modern and ancient cultures regarding emotions,³³ makes the continuing employment of such terminology useful.³⁴

It is important, however, in an analysis such as the present study to be attentive to the potential differences in ancient and modern understandings and to be observant of contextual issues pertaining to the texts in which terms referring to emotion appear. F. Scott Spencer concludes, “I think it is on the right track in granting that we moderns, *with due openness and diligent study*, can still have a reasonable cross-cultural exchange with our ancient brothers and sisters about emotions.”³⁵

The present study will employ the utilitarian term *emotion*, and in our analysis of source material, we will err on the side of being inclusive with respect to terms that potentially convey a sense of emotion. This will allow for a broad framework for conceptualizing first-century notions of how miracle workers

31 Konstan, *Emotions of the Ancient Greeks*, 23–24.

32 Konstan, *Emotions of the Ancient Greeks*, 27.

33 Even Konstan, *Emotions of the Ancient Greeks*, 4, before highlighting the differences between ancient and modern concepts of emotion, states, “The *pathē* thus appear to correspond broadly to the kinds of sentiments that we typically or at least sometimes classify as emotions.”

34 Wierzbicka, who critiques the application of the term *emotion* to concepts in other languages and cultures, concedes, “[Emotion] is a word, however, which is so firmly entrenched in the scholarly literature written in English ... that it seems unrealistic at this stage to give it up altogether” (*Emotions across Languages*, 23). Similarly, Mirguet, “Emotion’ in the Hebrew Bible,” 464, admits, “Starting with our modern categories and lexemes may be inevitable.”

35 F. Scott Spencer, “Getting a Feel for the ‘Mixed’ and ‘Vexed’ Study of Emotions in Biblical Literature,” in *Mixed Feelings and Vexed Passions: Exploring Emotions in Biblical Literature*, ed. F. Scott Spencer (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017), 32 (emphasis mine).

may be characterized through the portrayal of emotions. While there are many varied ways one can define or understand emotion, the present work aligns most readily with the recent cognitive approaches.³⁶ And of the many definitions of the term *emotion*, I find the simple definition given by Robert Roberts to be the most attractive: Emotions are “concern-based construals.”³⁷

I also join in the optimism of those who see an ability to reasonably discuss “emotions” in relation to these ancient texts. The Greek language seems to provide a linguistic space for understanding emotions that bears some resemblance to our own understanding of emotions. And while differences between ancient and modern concepts are inevitable, we can gain significant insights regarding the portrayal of miracle workers in the ancient world by observing how their emotions are portrayed in the accounts. By including the emotional response or reaction of the miracle worker to a given situation, these ancient texts add something to the characterization of the one performing the miracle.

With the important qualifications outlined above in mind, we can now turn to examine the appearance of emotion in miracle stories of the ancient world. Our analysis of miracle stories will take up this chapter and the next: The present chapter will focus on Greco-Roman miracle stories; the next chapter will examine Jewish miracle stories. It is taken for granted here that both areas of literature serve as background material for understanding the Gospel of Mark. Greater attention will be given to accounts most historically proximate to the composition of Mark’s Gospel, though certain older texts have value for our purposes as well, given their presumed familiarity. In both chapters, the goal is to be as extensive as possible in the examination of miracle stories from Greco-Roman and Jewish literature from the beginning of the Second Temple period (the late sixth century BCE) up to the end of the first century CE. It is important to note that the focus of this research is on the portrayal of the emotions of the *miracle worker*, not other characters in the stories or texts. The present work thus does not take into account the portrayals of emotion that are occasionally assigned to either the suppliant or the onlookers—most frequently joy or amazement, typically in light of the performance of a miracle.

Following the analyses of both Greco-Roman literature and Jewish literature a summary of significant points will be offered. At the end of chapter 3, we will identify some commonalities that emerge in both bodies of literature and will draw some conclusions pertaining to the findings. This will allow for the development of an overall picture of the use of emotion language in miracle

36 See the resources listed in footnote 6 of the present chapter.

37 Roberts, *Spiritual Emotions*, 11. For more on this definition, see chapter 1, footnote 1 in the present work.

stories during the period leading up to and surrounding the composition of Mark's Gospel.

2 Emotion in Greco-Roman Miracle Stories

Greek mythology was replete with the idea that the gods intervened in human history. From the epics of Homer and the cosmogony of Hesiod, to the fifth-century plays of Euripides and Sophocles, to the works of geographers and historians like Strabo, Herodotus, and Diodorus Siculus, to the Roman poets Virgil and Ovid, stories of the gods' involvement in human affairs became an ingrained aspect of Greco-Roman religion and culture. Knowledge of such traditions was ubiquitous throughout the Roman Empire during the first century CE.³⁸

In addition to the miraculous interventions attributed to the gods, miracle traditions arose in relation to certain human figures, perhaps most famously imperial figures such as Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, and Vespasian.³⁹ Traditions also emerged about the philosophers Pythagoras and Empedocles, that their attunement to natural forces enabled them to perform miracles.⁴⁰

Many attempts have been made to draw connections between these miracle accounts from the Greco-Roman world and the miracles attributed to Jesus. Such comparisons provided fertile ground for the *Religionsgeschichtliche* studies of the early- to mid-twentieth century, as well as the θεῖος ἀνὴρ discussions that were influential throughout much of the latter half of twentieth-century Jesus scholarship.⁴¹ While the present study does not draw the same conclusions as often resulted from those approaches—namely, that the portrait of Jesus's miraculous activity in the Gospels was dependent on those traditions—the widely known Greco-Roman miracle stories can certainly provide some insight for how a first-century writer or audience might expect a miracle worker to be described. For the specific contours of this study, we can ask two questions of these accounts: How are the emotions of the miracle workers portrayed in

38 See Keener, *Miracles*, 36–37; Cotter, *Miracles in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, 1; Paul J. Achtemeier, *Jesus and the Miracle Tradition* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2008), 201–5. Achtemeier goes so far as to say, “Common motifs occur and recur, leaving little doubt that belief in, or at least wonder at, miraculous events was universal in the Greco-Roman world.”

39 See, e.g., Tacitus, *Histories* 4.81–82; Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars* 7.2; Eustathius, *On the Iliad* 29. See also Cotter, *Miracles*, 39–42, 147–48, 155–59; Blackburn, *Theios Anēr*, 87–88.

40 See, e.g., Porphyry, *Life of Pythagoras* 27, 29, 33; Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras* 28, 135–136; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 8.59. See also Cotter, *Miracles*, 37–39, 143–45, 151–52; Blackburn, *Theios Anēr*, 37–53.

41 See the brief discussion of this in chapter 1.

these accounts? And what role do the depictions of those emotions play in the miracle stories? We begin with an assessment of works mentioning emotions in the miracle accounts of the Greco-Roman gods, subsequently turning our attention to human figures in the Greco-Roman world.

2.1 *The Gods*

While miraculous divine intervention is a common motif in Greco-Roman literature, emotion language seldom appears to describe the gods in individual miracle stories, especially when we narrow our focus to accounts from the Hellenistic and early imperial periods up to the composition of the Gospels.⁴² And even though benevolence is a common characteristic of the gods in Greek mythology, specific language depicting the gods' compassion in miracles on behalf of humanity seems, from the extant sources, to be rare, as we will see. But before we turn to the accounts that emerge during the period contemporaneous with the Jewish Second Temple, we begin with the Homeric epics.

2.1.1 Homeric Works

While our primary focus in this examination will be texts from the period most proximate to the composition of the Gospels, the depiction of emotions and divine intervention in the Homeric works is worth noting, given the widespread knowledge of these works in the first century.⁴³ Likely composed around the eighth century BCE, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* left an indelible mark on the

42 The accounts of miracles performed by the gods in, for example, Aelius Aristides and Apuleius (second century CE), Porphyry and Aelianus (third century CE), and Marinus (fifth century CE) may sometimes provide a trace of known traditions from an earlier period, but the speculative nature of such potential source traditions diminishes their usefulness for our purposes.

43 The works of Homer were part of the standard curricula throughout the Greco-Roman world. See Tim Whitmarsh, *Battling the Gods: Atheism in the Ancient World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), 30, who states, "To judge from surviving papyrus fragments, the only continuous texts that schoolchildren read in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt were by Homer, Euripides, and Menander, and they did so in the proportion 6:2:1." See also Margaret M. Mitchell, "Homer in the New Testament?" *Journal of Religion* 83 no. 2 (2003): 245, who states, "The Homeric epics constituted the literary 'classics' of the ancient world—the school textbooks, literary exemplars, theological sourcebooks, and moralizing fodder for generations of educated men (and some women)"; Dennis R. MacDonald, *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 4, who refers to "Homer's unrivaled hegemony in ancient education"; and Matthew Ryan Hauge, "The Creation of Person in Ancient Narrative and the Gospel of Mark," in *Character Studies and the Gospel of Mark*, ed. Christopher W. Skinner and Matthew Ryan Hauge (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 57–59.

religious and literary landscape of the Greco-Roman world. Tim Whitmarsh states, “It was unimaginable that a Greek would not know the epic tales of Troy ... or how Odysseus journeyed home after the war, to be reunited with his wife Penelope.”⁴⁴ While the influence of Homeric works on the Gospel of Mark is a point of debate,⁴⁵ given the fact that the Homeric works were so widely known in the ancient world and the fact that Mark was composed in Greek, a general familiarity with the Homeric epics should be assumed at some level (at least on the part of the author, if not many in the audience). And divine intervention is a prominent feature of these works. Most of the examples that follow come from the *Iliad*, though one instance from the *Odyssey* will be addressed.

2.1.1.1 *The Iliad*

The *Iliad*, with its epic tales of the Trojan War, presents a world in which the Olympian gods engage in battle with men and each other, taking sides with the Trojans and Achaeans in the fight over Troy and regularly affecting the outcome of human affairs. While there are many scenes depicting heroic human deeds and human deliberation, it becomes clear throughout the work that the fate of the battle—and of individual humans—is in the hands of the gods, especially Zeus, the head of the Olympian pantheon.⁴⁶

The *Iliad* is filled with stories in which the gods provide some extraordinary intervention to alter natural outcomes. Zeus allows only periods of unimpeded human activity before further orchestrating events to follow the course that has been set. As such, there are frequent instances of a god providing extraordinary protection of an individual,⁴⁷ or giving unnatural strength to a weary warrior,⁴⁸ or providing some omen to encourage a particular side.⁴⁹

Further, the emotions of the gods are often on display in the *Iliad*. The gods experience grief at the death of their human progeny,⁵⁰ anger at the actions of

44 Whitmarsh, *Battling the Gods*, 29.

45 Perhaps the chief proponent that the Gospel of Mark was directly influenced by the works of Homer is MacDonald, *Homeric Epics*; see also Dennis R. MacDonald, *The Gospels and Homer: Imitations of Greek Epic in Mark and Luke-Acts* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015). MacDonald's work has been critiqued by many, however; cf. e.g., Morna D. Hooker, review of *The Homeric Epic and the Gospel of Mark*, by Dennis R. MacDonald, *JTS* 53 no. 1 (2002): 196–98; Mitchell, “Homer in the New Testament?” 244–60.

46 E.g., in *Iliad* 15.47–77, readers are given an inside view of Zeus's plans for the remainder of the war, which then plays out in the books that follow. See also 4.1–103; 13.345–360.

47 E.g., 5.311–317; 11.434–438; 12.400–412; 13.560–563; 15.461–465.

48 E.g., 5.110–132; 13.59–61; 17.560–574; 19.338–356.

49 E.g., 8.246–252; 12.195–228; 24.303–321.

50 E.g., 16.431–438; 16.458–461.

other gods,⁵¹ and pity at the misfortunes of their favored individuals.⁵² Notably, the plot advances largely in relation to the anger of Zeus, who allows the Achaeans to suffer at the hands of the Trojan Hector on account of their treatment of Achilles, before ultimately granting them victory over Hector because of Zeus's greater anger toward Troy.

While both miracle stories and portrayals of emotion are somewhat frequent in the *Iliad*, specifying the connection between a god's emotion and the performance of an individual miracle is rare. A few instances emerge, as we will now observe.

Poseidon (Book 13). During a point in the war when Zeus is giving aid to the Trojans and the Trojan army is pressing in on the Achaeans, Poseidon, the god of the sea, intervenes on behalf of the Achaeans, performing a number of supernatural actions to their aid. First, he “struck the two [the two leaders named Ajax] with his staff and filled them with mighty strength and made their limbs light.”⁵³ Later, he casts a spell over the Trojan warrior Alcathous, causing him to stand still without defense while the Achaean Idomeneus drives a spear through him.⁵⁴ Poseidon also prevents the spear of the Trojan Adamas from piercing the Achaean Antilochus.⁵⁵ Both at the outset of book 13 and in Hera's defense before Zeus in book 15, in which the goddess explains to Zeus what has taken place while he slept, Poseidon's actions are described as being the result of his “pity” (ἐλεαίρω, 13.15; ἐλεέω, 15.44) on the Achaeans.

Zeus and Apollo (Book 15). Book 15 of the *Iliad* opens with Zeus rising from his sleep to find that the Trojan commander, Hector, has been severely wounded in battle, having been struck by the Achaean Ajax (book 14). At the sight of afflicted Hector, Zeus “took pity” (ἐλεέω; 15.12). His response then turns to anger as he realizes that what had happened was the result of Hera's cunning machinations. Hera had arranged for Zeus to be overcome by sleep while Poseidon wreaked havoc on the Trojan forces. Zeus castigates Hera, which leads to Hera's shirking responsibility in the matter. Zeus then seeks a demonstration of Hera's loyalty by asking her to stay Poseidon's involvement on behalf of the Trojans and to send Apollo to restore Hector's health. Hera consents to

51 E.g., 4.23–42; 5.888–892; 10.517; 15.217.

52 E.g., 8.33; 10.272–294; 22.169; 24.19–23. Mirguet, *Early History of Compassion*, 99, speaking specifically of the emotion “pity,” concludes that in post-Homeric Greek literature, this emotion is generally not attributed to the gods—that is, until the Greek scriptures emerged during the Hellenistic period. See chapter 3 of the present work for a discussion of the Greek Scriptures.

53 13.59–61. Translations of the *Iliad* are taken from A. T. Murray, trans., *Homer: Iliad Books 13–24*, LCL 171 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

54 13.434–439.

55 13.560–563.

Zeus's orders, and Apollo appears before Hector. Upon his arrival, Apollo finds that Hector has already been partially revived by Zeus himself. Apollo then fully restores Hector's health and vitality (15.236–280). Even though Zeus's expression of "pity" and the healing of Hector are separated by some 250 lines of poetry, the connection is clear. It should be noted, however, that Hector's revival ultimately served Zeus's agenda with regard to the war. As Zeus relays to Hera, Hector's preservation will lead to a series of events that ultimately benefits the Achaeans—including the eventual death of Hector himself at the hands of Achilles (15.59–71). So is this to be viewed as a true act of pity by Zeus or as merely an embellishment of the god's activity, serving the larger purposes he has in store for the war?

Zeus (16.384–393; 17.626–655). In these two passages, Zeus's control of the weather comes to the forefront. Book 16 recounts the entry into battle of Patroclus, Achilles's dearest comrade, his success in driving back the Trojans, and his death at the hands of Hector. During the Trojans' flight before Patroclus an allusion is made to how Zeus sometimes causes torrents of rain to fall during harvesttime as a punishment upon the unjust. Such weather phenomena are described as stemming from the "anger" (χάλεπαίνω, 16.386) of Zeus.

In book 17, the two sides fight to obtain Patroclus's corpse. While both sides are aided by the gods in this conflict, eventually the Achaeans prevail and are able to bring Patroclus's body back to their camp. At one point during the struggle, amid a thick fog, Ajax prays in tears to Zeus that he might lift the fog and cause the sun to shine forth upon them so that Ajax could see well enough to send a comrade to Achilles to inform him of Patroclus's death. Zeus has "pity" (ὀλοφύρομαι, 17.648) upon Ajax's tears and grants his request immediately, allowing Ajax to send Antilochus to Achilles. In both of these passages, the forces of nature serve the bidding of Zeus, whose emotional reactions to events on earth are seen to precipitate nature miracles.

Zeus via Athene (19.338–356). After Patroclus' death, Achilles determines to join the battle. But first, he undergoes an extensive display of mourning for his fallen friend, which includes a refusal to eat. At the sound of Achilles's bemoaning, Zeus looks down with "pity" (ἐλεέω) on Achilles. Zeus then sends Athene to "shed into [Achilles's] breast nectar and pleasant ambrosia so that hunger may not come upon him" (19.347–348). This miraculous feeding gives strength to Achilles prior to his reengagement in the war. But as with the pity Zeus previously showed to Hector (see the discussion of book 15 above), the pity here shown to Achilles also has the effect of furthering Zeus's overarching purposes for the war.

Apollo, Zeus, and other gods (Book 24). A final example depicting emotion in a miracle story from the *Iliad* comes in its final book. After killing Hector, Achilles brings the Trojan warrior's body back to the Achaean camp

and parades it around behind his team of horses. Apollo, who aided Hector throughout the war, feels “pity” (ἐλεαίρω, 24.19) on Hector and prevents his body from becoming disfigured in spite of Achilles’s repeated attempts. Then, Apollo’s pity is mirrored by other gods, who out of “pity” (ἐλεαίρω, 24.23) engender a plot that would allow Hector’s father, Priam, to recover the body. When Priam is preparing to head for the Achaean ships, he prays to Zeus to see if Zeus may have “pity” (ἐλεέω, 24.301) on him. Zeus responds by sending a good omen, an eagle flying by. Finally, Zeus again shows “pity” (ἐλεέω, 24.332) on Priam by enabling him to reach Achilles without any other Achaeans seeing him. The whole series of events in this final book, which culminates in a proper funeral for Hector, is thus portrayed as driven by a divine display of pity.

2.1.1.2 *The Odyssey*

While the gods likewise play a crucial role in the *Odyssey*, especially Athene, who frequently appears in the story to aid the protagonist and his son Telemachus, divine involvement is generally tempered in comparison to the *Iliad*. There are, then, fewer instances of miraculous deeds attributed to the gods. That said, as the epic tale’s opening makes clear, the successful return of Odysseus to his homeland and subsequent defeat of his wife’s suitors are envisioned as the result of the gods having “pity” (ἐλεαίρω, 1.19) on Odysseus,⁵⁶ while the struggles he experiences during his journey stem from Poseidon’s “incessant rage” (ἄσπερχές μενέαινε, 1.20). Even as few references are made throughout the remainder of the work to the gods’ pity, the unfolding of events reflects that their feelings (particularly Athene’s) for Odysseus are determinative of his success. A section of book 5 provides an example in which emotions are tied to individual miracle stories.

5.282–453. After the nymph Calypso releases Odysseus, the warrior sets sail for the land of the Phaeacians. But as Odysseus approaches the coast, Poseidon notices him, and in his “anger” (χόομαι, 5.284) brings a fierce windstorm upon the sea. While Odysseus is in great distress, struggling to maintain control of his raft, the marine goddess Ino takes notice, has “pity” (ἐλεέω, 5.336) on him, and joins him in the raft, revealing to him a way to escape the storm. Then, once Odysseus is on the brink of reaching the shore, he notices that there are only rock cliffs before him and no place to get upon land. Odysseus finally spots a river mouth, and he prays to Zeus that he might reach the river safely, appealing to the “pity” (ἐλεαίρω, 5.450) of the god. Zeus responds by calming the

56 This action resulting from pity is perhaps most pronounced at the opening of book 5, where, in a council of the gods, Athene appeals to Zeus to come to Odysseus’s aid. Zeus responds by sending Hermes to Calypso, instructing her to set Odysseus free (5.1–42).

waters and bringing him safely to the river, by which he is able to find suitable land. Again, the forces of nature are used by the Greek pantheon to affect outcomes for individuals. In this battle of the gods over the waters in book 5—as is true of the story as a whole—pity prevails over anger, and Athene's purposes for Odysseus are carried forward.

These miracle stories from the epics of Homer present a picture of the gods as often motivated to action by their emotional responses to the happenings on earth. The human characters in the story appear to take it for granted that the gods are capable of acting on their behalf and understand that staying in their favor (primarily through offering pleasing sacrifices) puts them in a position to call upon the gods for help in time of need. However, in most of the examples cited here, the pity of the gods results not from a specific appeal by a human but rather from the reactionary nature of the gods themselves. The same could be said of the miraculous events that result from the anger of the gods. While the particular miraculous interventions performed by the gods can often be cast as responses to the pain and suffering of individual humans, these miracles (even those described as acts of pity) ultimately seem to serve the predetermined outcome of events (in the *Iliad*, Zeus's intention for the Achaeans to sack Troy; in the *Odyssey*, the gods' desire for Odysseus to return home). Nonetheless, for those living in the first century CE the Homeric epics would have provided a framework for connecting emotions with the performance of a miracle.

2.1.2 Greco-Roman Miracle Accounts from the Second Temple Period

In her work on Greco-Roman miracle stories, Wendy Cotter has singled out three divine miracle workers whom Greco-Roman literature has especially identified as acting with compassion: Asclepius, Heracles, and Isis.⁵⁷ However, in my own survey of miracle accounts from Greco-Roman literature, I found allusions to the beneficence of all three figures, but I found emotion language only in relation to the individual miracle stories of Asclepius and Isis.⁵⁸ In

57 See Cotter, *Miracles*, 11–12, 16.

58 For example, Diodorus Siculus (*Library of History* 1.24.7–8) describes Heracles's clearing the earth of wild beasts as a benefaction (εὐεργεσίαν) toward the people. But the story is told void of indicating any emotion on the part of Heracles in performing this benevolent service. Similarly, Diodorus (*Library of History* 1.25.7) describes Horus, the son of Isis and Osiris, as “a benefactor [εὐεργετήν] of the race of men through his oracular responses and his healings,” yet he supplies no specific healing account and does not allude in any way to Horus's emotions. (This translation of Diodorus Siculus is taken from Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History, Volume 1: Books 1–2.34*, trans. C. H. Oldfather, LCL 279 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933], 83.)

addition to the stories of these two figures, we might also add a reference to Jupiter (Zeus) in Livy's *History of Rome*, to which we now turn.

2.1.2.1 *Zeus*

Livy, *History of Rome* 2.36 (late 1st century BCE). In the second book of his mammoth work on the history of Rome from its founding to the reign of Augustus, written in the late first century BCE, Livy includes a story of the punitive sickness of one Titus Latinus and his subsequent healing. The setting of the story is an occurrence of the Great Games in the early fifth century BCE. Titus Latinus had a dream in which Jupiter (Zeus) conveyed displeasure about the procession at the opening of the games. In the dream, Jupiter ordered Titus to inform the consuls that the games needed to be restarted on account of the insufficient procession. Titus's hesitancy to convey the message for fear of embarrassment results in the death of Titus's son and then a sudden, violent illness that comes upon Titus himself. Both Titus's reckoning of the events and the narrator's comments reflect the notion that these punishments inflicted upon Titus were the direct product of Jupiter's anger (*ira, irasque*; 2.36.6). The healing of Titus, which follows his confession of the dream, is described as a *miraculum* (2.36.7). However, there is no mention of Jupiter's emotional state in relation to the healing.

2.1.2.2 *Asclepius*

Throughout the Greco-Roman world, no one was as renowned for healing as Asclepius.⁵⁹ While the myth surrounding this figure takes some divergent forms, the most common notion is that he was considered the son of the god Apollo and the human Coronis.⁶⁰ When Coronis was killed as punishment for her infidelity to Apollo, Asclepius was extracted from her womb and supernaturally nurtured. Asclepius was then taught the art of medicine by the centaur Chiron and went on to become a prolific healer, having the ability even to raise the dead. A common tradition arose that Zeus killed Asclepius with a thunderbolt because Asclepius was withholding people from Hades, the god of the underworld. According to the tradition, Zeus resurrected Asclepius, however,

59 Regarding this claim, see Kee, *Early Christian World*, 78; Cotter, *Miracles*, 12; Hans-Josef Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions*, trans. Brian McNeil (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 156; Keener, *Miracles*, 38.

60 For a discussion of the Asclepius myth, see Kee, *Early Christian World*, 78–83; see also Cotter, *Miracles*, 16; Klauck, *Religious Context*, 156; Achtemeier, *Miracle Tradition*, 205–6. For ancient sources on the Asclepius myth, see the collection in Emma J. Edelstein and Ludwig Edelstein, *Asclepius: Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies*, Volumes I and II (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 11–59.

and gave him a position inside the Greek pantheon. Asclepius came to be worshiped as the god of healing, and his cult became widespread throughout the Greek Empire, with temples (or *Asclepieions*) devoted to him appearing in a number of cities.

Many accounts of Asclepius's healing activities have been preserved, including a large number of inscriptions from the temples dedicated to Asclepius, particularly from what seems to have been the most renowned of these temples, located in Epidaurus.⁶¹ At these sites, the sick would come and sleep in a section of the temple called the abaton, where they hoped to receive a dream pertaining to their healing.⁶² The inscriptions testify to the successful healing by Asclepius of many different ailments. The vast majority of these testimonies are succinctly told and follow a customary pattern of relaying (1) the ailment, (2) the means of the cure, and (3) the acknowledgment of healing at the time of departure from the temple. Occasionally, additional details are supplied,⁶³ but the portrayal of Asclepius's emotions (or his attitude toward the situation in general) in these accounts is rare. And while Asclepius was renowned for his care and aid for humanity, the explicit mention of his compassion in individual miracle stories is seldom found in the extant literature. I have identified only three instances predating the first century CE in which Asclepius's feelings toward a suppliant are explicitly described in a miracle account, all found on inscriptions from Epidaurus.

Inscriptiones Graecae 4.1.121–22, Stele 1.8 (3rd century BCE). In this testimony, a certain boy named Euphanes, who was suffering from “stones,” slept in the temple. Asclepius appeared to him in his sleep and asked what gift the boy would give the god upon his cure. The boy replied that he would offer him ten dice. At this response, Asclepius laughed (γέλαω) and then provided the cure. It is not altogether clear what role, if any, Asclepius's amusement had in the healing. Nonetheless, it provides an example of the portrayal of an emotional reaction on the part of the god in interaction with a suppliant.

Inscriptiones Graecae 4.1.121–22, Stele 2.35 (3rd century BCE). In this account, an unnamed lame person—with an infirmity necessitating a stretcher—came to the temple and saw a vision in his sleep. In the man's vision, Asclepius ordered him to climb up to the top of the temple. The man failed in his first attempt to do so. Asclepius's initial response to this failure was anger (ἀγανακτέω), and then his feelings turned to amusement as he laughed at (ἐπιγέλαω)

61 See, e.g., the inscriptions collected in Edelstein and Edelstein, *Asclepius*, 1:221–54.

62 See Edelstein and Edelstein, *Asclepius*, 1:194–254.

63 E.g., sacrifices presented by the suppliants are sometimes described; see *Inscriptiones Graecae* IV, 1.121–22, Stele 1.5.

the man's fear. The man made another attempt, this time successful, and he left the temple cured.

Inscriptiones Graecae 4.1.128, Stele 5.57–79 (3rd century BCE). This inscription, known as the Hymn of Isyllus after its purported author, contains some political statements and a hymn to Asclepius. The author refers to a sick boy from Bosporos, who petitions Asclepius for his health. The boy recognizes his own deficiency in alleviating his illness and pleads with Asclepius, “Have pity on me” (μὲν ἐπιόκτειρον).⁶⁴ Interestingly, no cure is recorded on the inscription. Rather, it is told that Asclepius departs the boy to address other matters, promising to return at an unspecified time. While Asclepius's response to the request is absent—it is not stated that he had pity on the boy—the request itself implies the belief that Asclepius was in a position capable of offering such pity.

These three inscriptions do not give the impression of a compassionate god. In the first inscription, Asclepius is portrayed as amused at the suppliants' meager attempts to please him. In the second inscription, Asclepius is depicted as angry and then amused, and the actual healing occurs only after the suppliant successfully performs the assigned task. In the third inscription, the suppliant makes reference to the possibility of Asclepius's extending pity, but the god neglects to do so, at least at that point. These few excerpts do not disprove the notion that Asclepius was considered compassionate. In fact, the mere volume of successful healings outlined in the Asclepieions presumably gives testimony to his perceived willingness and desire to heal those who come to him for help—leaving the impression that he has compassion on suffering humanity—even as such terminology is not made explicit in the inscriptions. But it is interesting to note that while a number of the healing accounts of Asclepius contain details surrounding the healing, and while Asclepius is well known as compassionate in the ancient world, there is a lack of attention paid specifically to that compassion in the extant accounts.

2.1.2.3 *Isis*

Isis was an Egyptian deity who became wildly popular in the Greco-Roman world. The ancient myth concerning Isis and her brother/husband Osiris, first attested in the fourth millennium BCE in the “Memphite Theology,”⁶⁵ was adapted and used by the Greeks, who often equated her with Demeter, and

64 See the similar request made of Jesus by Bartimaeus (ἐλέησόν με, Mark 10:47–48; Luke 18:38–39).

65 Kee, *Early Christian World*, 105.

later, Aphrodite.⁶⁶ Isis was venerated in her roles as faithful wife and mother and as a protectress of the weak and vulnerable.⁶⁷ Regarding her ability to heal, the first-century BCE Greek historian Diodorus Siculus offered the following description of Isis:

She manifests herself in healings. For standing above the sick in their sleep she gives them aid for their diseases and works remarkable cures upon such as submit themselves to her; and many who have been despaired of by their physicians because of the difficult nature of their malady are restored to health by her, while numbers who have altogether lost the use of their eyes or of some other part of their body, whenever they turn for help to this goddess, are restored to their previous condition.⁶⁸

Sharon Kelly Heyob suggests that the appeal of Isis among the Greeks and Romans can largely be attributed to how relatable she was considered to be in her beneficence. Of Isis, Heyob says, “Her emotions were very human ones—love, loyalty, sorrow, compassion—and it was her human qualities with which the ordinary man could identify and which caused her widespread popularity.”⁶⁹ While such emotions may be alluded to or implied in a number of general descriptions of Isis from the ancient world, there seem to be only a small number of extant texts that bring out emotion language in an individual miracle story, and as we will see, the emotion described is not always related to beneficence.⁷⁰

Isidorus, *Hymn to Isis* 1.25–38 (ca. 88 BCE). Our first text comes from an inscription by an otherwise unknown Isidorus found on a gate at the temple

66 For the identification of Isis with Demeter, see, e.g., Herodotus, *The Persian Wars*, 2.156; see also Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 1.25.1–2. For a Greek version of the Isis and Osiris myth, see Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris* 12–21 (*Moralia* 355D–359D). Cf. Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 266.

67 Cotter, *Miracles*, 30; cf. also Sharon Kelly Heyob, *The Cult of Isis among Women in the Graeco-Roman World* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 44, 80. Kee, *Early Christian World*, 128, states, “The predominant image of Isis in the Hellenistic-early Roman period seems to have been that of guarantor of life and benefactress to those in need.”

68 Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 1.25.4–5 (Oldfather, LCL).

69 Heyob, *Cult of Isis*, 44.

70 Perhaps the most vivid description of Isis’s beneficence and her feelings toward humanity is found in book 11 of Apuleius’s *Metamorphoses* (or *The Golden Ass*), in which the main character, Lucius, is transformed back into his human form by the goddess and becomes an initiate in the cult of Isis. However, this story was composed in the second half of the second century CE and thus has reduced value for the purposes of the present study.

of Hermouthis and Isis in Narmouthis in the Fayyum region of Egypt.⁷¹ This is the last of four hymns of Isidorus inscribed on the gates at the temple. The first three hymns are directed to the goddess, while the fourth is a celebration of the temple's founder.⁷² The inscription seems to have been composed in the early first century BCE, likely around 88 BCE, when Ptolemy IX Soter II returned to Egypt and the temple was dedicated.⁷³

In this hymn, the miraculous powers of Isis are extolled. Examples of the “manifold miracles” (*Hymn to Isis* 1.4) she had performed to bring “livelihood to humanity” (1.5) include the discovery of vegetation, the fertility of the Nile region, deliverance from war, healing from physical affliction, and help at sea. Isidorus then personalizes the message by appealing to Isis to show herself “merciful” (εὐέλκτος) to him in his own “distress” (λύπη). No particular affliction is mentioned, but the idea seems to be that Isidorus—and others who would read these words at the temple—could appeal for a display of the mercy of Isis similar to her previous behavior on behalf of others.

Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 1.25.2–3 (60–30 BCE). Book One of Diodorus Siculus's voluminous *Library of History* contains a treatment of Egypt that focuses heavily on Isis and Osiris and their purported relationship to the gods of the Greek pantheon. At one point, Diodorus draws attention to the healing capabilities attributed to Isis by the Egyptians. According to them,

She was the discoverer of many health-giving drugs and was greatly versed in the science of healing; consequently, now that she has attained immortality, she finds her greatest delight [χαίρω] in the healing of mankind and gives aid in their sleep to those who call upon her, plainly manifesting both her very presence and her beneficence towards men who ask her help.⁷⁴

For Diodorus, this healing activity of Isis was, as the Egyptians saw it, performed as an expression of the goddess's joy, done out of her care for humanity. Diodorus then elaborates by pointing to testimony of the healing activities of Isis (1.25.4–6), though no further emotion is mentioned.

71 Ian Moyer, “Isidorus at the Gates of the Temple,” in *Greco-Roman Interactions: Literature, Translation, and Culture, 500 BCE–300 CE*, ed. Ian Rutherford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 210.

72 Moyer, “Isidorus,” 211.

73 Vera Frederika Vanderlip, *The Four Greek Hymns of Isidorus and the Cult of Isis*, American Studies in Papyrology, vol. 12 (Toronto: A. M. Hakkert, 1972), 9–13.

74 Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 1.25.2–3 (Oldfather, LCL).

Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris* 16 (late 1st or early 2nd century CE). A very different picture of the emotions of Isis in relation to the performance of miracles emerges in Plutarch's *On Isis and Osiris*. Plutarch recounts the story of Osiris's death at the hands of Typhon, his brother. Typhon had arranged for Osiris to be locked up in a coffin and thrown into the Nile. Isis, the wife of Osiris, then goes on a quest to locate the coffin and discovers that it had washed up on the shore at Byblos. Isis takes the coffin on board a ship and sets sail on the Phaedrus River. When the river proves difficult to navigate due to a boisterous wind, Isis grows "angry" (θυμώω) at the river and causes it to dry up. In this case, the miracle is said to be purely an act of rage as a result of personal inconvenience.

Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris* 17 (late 1st or early 2nd century CE). Immediately after the account of the dried-up river, Plutarch narrates another miracle that results from Isis's anger. When she finds seclusion and opens the coffin, Isis is overcome with grief. The eldest son of the king of Byblos, who had accompanied Isis, came up behind her and took a glance at the contents of the coffin. When Isis became aware of the child's presence, she gave him a mere look of "anger" (ὀργή), which results in the child's sudden death. Again, the miracle springs from the goddess's angry reaction. This story and the preceding one hardly serve as examples of the beneficence attributed to Isis by Isidorus and Diodorus.

From these few accounts in which the emotions of Isis are on display in relation to the performance of miracles, we are left with varied portrayals. In the two accounts from the first century BCE, Isis is presented as someone who is willing, even glad, to help the afflicted. Meanwhile, in the accounts from Plutarch, arising more than a century later, Isis is presented as causing affliction for those whom she views as dishonoring toward her or her objectives. As is the case with Asclepius, the widespread positive reputation of Isis suggests that she was viewed as compassionate, but we have little corroborating evidence from the extant miracle stories.

2.2 *Human Figures*

A number of human figures were associated with the performance of miracles in the Greco-Roman world, including the philosopher Pythagoras and his disciple Empedocles, as well as certain Roman emperors, most notably Augustus and Vespasian.⁷⁵ Yet, while in some accounts an emotion may be inferred, such as when Pythagoras is said to have calmed storms "for the comfort and

75 For examples, see Cotter, *Miracles*, 35–42; Blackburn, *Theios Anēr*, 13–91.

safe passage of his friends,”⁷⁶ individual miracle stories depicting these figures’ emotions are lacking in the extant sources. One exception is Tacitus’s account of a healing attributed to Vespasian.

Tacitus, *Histories* 4.81 (late 1st or early 2nd century CE). The story of Vespasian’s healing of two men (one blind, one lame) in Alexandria is recounted by Tacitus and Suetonius, both Roman historians writing in the late first or early second century CE. Both accounts depict the miraculous activity as playing a role in Vespasian’s increasing popularity and in validating his divine favor during the early days of his reign.

In Suetonius’s account,⁷⁷ Vespasian is hesitant to perform the miracle, as he did not believe the reported promise from the god Serapis that he would be successful. Only at the persuasion of his friends did Vespasian attempt the healing, with success. Suetonius reports the story in a rather straightforward manner, with little to no embellishment. Tacitus recounts the same basic narrative, including Vespasian’s initial reluctance and subsequent successful healing. But in Tacitus’s account, after those around Vespasian persuaded him to attempt the healing and he realized he had nothing to lose, he is said to have performed the healing “with a joyful countenance” (*laeto ipse vultu*). In the literary context, however, it seems that this joy had more to do with Vespasian’s realization that he would be viewed favorably than with concern for the suppliants. In fact, when the two men first appealed to Vespasian, he ridiculed them. So while Tacitus’s account includes a positive portrayal of the miracle worker’s emotion, the emotion is not a reflection of the healer’s attitude toward the ones in need.

2.2.1 A Note on Apollonius of Tyana

The miracle-working human figure from the Greco-Roman world that seems to be most often compared to Jesus is Apollonius of Tyana, an itinerant philosopher who lived in the first century CE, and to whom many miracles have been attributed.⁷⁸ The problem with such comparisons is that most of the written

76 This account, found in Porphyry, *Life of Pythagoras* 29, comes from the late third century CE. Translation taken from Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie, trans., *The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library: An Anthology of Ancient Writings Which Relate to Pythagoras and Pythagorean Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Phanes, 1987), 128–29.

77 Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars* 8.7.2.

78 See especially Gerd Petzge, *Die Traditionen Über Apollonius von Tyana und das Neue Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), along with his “Die historische Frage nach den Wundertaten Jesu,” *NTS* 22 (1975): 180–204. In assessing the role of Apollonius in the θεῖος ἀνὴρ discussion, Erkki Koskenniemi (“Apollonius of Tyana: A Typical θεῖος ἀνὴρ?” *JBL* 117 no. 3 [1998]: 460) states, “Seldom do any advocates of the θεῖος ἀνὴρ hypothesis cite ancient sources without mention of Apollonius.” See also Keener, *Miracles*, 53: “Of all ancient stories

material we have on Apollonius—particularly those elements most similar to Gospel miracle accounts—comes from the third century CE, in the writings of Philostratus.⁷⁹ Since the focus of the present project is on analyzing literary material that dates up to the end of the first century (or in some cases, the early second century), I have excluded Philostratus's material on Apollonius.

3 Summary of Findings

From the accounts surveyed here, we can make a few observations. First, the use of emotion language in miracle accounts from the Greco-Roman world is sparse—especially when we narrow our focus on material dating from the Second Temple period. While Asclepius, Heracles, and Isis were all renowned in the ancient world for their beneficence toward humanity, the extant individual miracle accounts relayed of these figures lack explicit attestation of this reputation.⁸⁰

Second, emotion language is almost exclusively used in relation to divine healings. The present investigation identified only one direct association of a human miracle worker's emotion with the working of the miracle. And in this single instance, the story of a healing performed by Vespasian, the depiction of the healer's emotion (joy) is not a reaction to the benefit given to the suppliant but is a realization by Vespasian of the onlookers' favorable impression of him.⁸¹

Third, in these accounts we can detect in the views of the miracle workers toward the suppliants a division between positive emotions, such as pity or joy and what could be seen as negative emotions, such as anger.⁸² A miracle may be performed as an act of beneficence toward an individual in need, or

about miracle workers, those about Apollonius come closest to the stories about Jesus in the Gospels."

79 Meier, *Marginal Jew* 2:576–81; Kee, *Early Christian World*, 257; Keener, *Miracles*, 55; Koskenniemi, "A Typical θεῖος ἀνὴρ?" 461.

80 Some of the individual miracle accounts connected to Asclepius and Isis do contain emotion language, but as discussed above, the emotion in such cases is often anger or amusement.

81 See the earlier treatment of this miracle from Tacitus's account.

82 The portrayal of Asclepius's amusement in two inscriptions (*Inscriptiones Graecae* 4.1.121–22, Stele 1.8 and Stele 2.35) is exceptional in that the emotion may be considered neutral or varied. In the first instance, the amusement seems congenial, as Asclepius is humored by a young suppliant's meager offering. In the second instance, the amusement takes on a mocking tone, as it follows from Asclepius's initial anger at the suppliant for his inability to perform a requested task. In both cases, Asclepius does perform the beneficent act.

it may be experienced as a punishment upon those who fell into the miracle worker's disfavor. The emotion language employed reflects this dual function of miracle.

Fourth, with respect to miracles performed by the gods, the activity of the gods is typically driven by the overarching purposes and objectives of the gods. This is perhaps most clearly seen in the Homeric works, where the machinations of the gods in fulfilling their plans are made explicit throughout the accounts, but it is also seen in, for example, Plutarch's accounts of Isis's miracles, in which Isis's concern to care for Osiris's corpse affects how she responds to outside circumstances. In many cases, it seems that the depicted emotions of the miracle workers are of secondary importance when it comes to the miracle workers' motivation for acting in a given situation, which leads to a final point.

Fifth, power dynamics seem frequently to be in play in the portrayal of emotions among the miracle workers. Françoise Mirguet notes, "When the self shows pity, it signals that it is not suffering from the pain affecting the other; it displays a socially appropriate response, characteristic of higher status."⁸³ The separation of the gods (or the emperor) from the actual suffering means that the one capable of performing the miracle in these situations can act according to their own purposes and objectives without such actions intimately affecting the miracle worker. It would seem that a term like ἐλεέω ("to pity," or "to have mercy") would be conducive to conveying a miracle worker's involvement while also maintaining a level of distance with the suffering individual. So Mirguet concludes, "The emotion [pity] automatically positions the self outside this disadvantageous condition, in the relatively well-off and privileged situation of the beholder, who can choose either to relieve or ignore this suffering."⁸⁴ Meanwhile, responses of anger that result in punitive actions would undoubtedly reinforce the authority of the miracle worker over against the object of that anger.⁸⁵

83 Mirguet, *Early History of Compassion*, 49.

84 Mirguet, *Early History of Compassion*, 232. This option either to relieve or to ignore suffering is clearly evidenced both in the Homeric works and in the story of Asclepius discussed earlier in which an appeal to pity is essentially met with ignorance.

85 See, e.g., the instance concerning Isis in Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris* 17, and the discussion of this story in the present chapter.

Miracle Workers and Emotion in Ancient Jewish Literature

1 Emotion in Jewish Miracle Stories

In the previous chapter we examined the portrayal of miracle workers' emotions in Greco-Roman miracle accounts. While many of those stories may have been familiar to Mark and his audience, it is critical to recognize the pre-eminent influence of the biblical tradition and other Second Temple Jewish texts on the author of the Gospel. Despite the attention Greco-Roman miracle accounts received in the early- to mid-twentieth century, numerous scholars have recognized that miracle traditions from Jewish sources supply the most pertinent background material for understanding Jesus's miracles.¹ As we will see in the discussion that follows, Jewish literature from the time period offers a trove of material when it comes to descriptions of miracle workers' emotions.

The analysis in this chapter is indebted to the work of Eric Eve. In *The Jewish Context of Jesus' Miracles*, Eve has undertaken the task of examining the miracle accounts of Second Temple Jewish literature, with the aim of placing greater weight on the Jewish context in understanding the miracles of Jesus.² Eve gives extensive treatment to about a dozen texts in his analysis but also includes a catch-all chapter for the remainder of the texts which contain miracle accounts, offering a brief analysis of these texts. Eve's comprehensive identification of miracle stories—including those which he does not analyze in great detail—provides a springboard for the following assessment of emotion language in Second Temple Jewish miracle accounts. The ordering of texts below corresponds to Eve's outline. For each text included here, a brief summary of the text is provided—including the probable date—before the pertinent miracle stories are discussed. The miracle stories are presented in a survey format, with conclusions left for the end of the chapter, allowing the reader to progress more quickly through the large number of stories. Certain themes will emerge as the reader works through the examples, however, and the stories themselves will serve as evidence for the concluding summary.

¹ See, e.g., Keener, *Miracles*, 1:58; Koskenniemi; "A Typical θεῖος ἀνὴρ?," 467.

² Eve, *Jewish Context*, 18–19.

1.1 *Hebrew Scriptures*

The focus of the present study is the use of emotion terms in Greek-language texts. But before we analyze the Jewish writings of the Second Temple period written in Greek, we must take a brief look at the Hebrew Scriptures themselves and what role emotions play within texts that depict miracle stories. While Jewish writings of the Second Temple period frequently made use of Greek translations of the Hebrew Scriptures (mostly the LXX), some made use of Hebrew texts. Furthermore, comparing miracle stories in the Hebrew Scriptures and in their Greek translations can help us better understand certain developments in emotional portrayal that occurred during the Second Temple period—such as the emergence of *σπλάγγχον* and cognates in describing an emotional response to human need.³

Françoise Mirguet has argued that the use of the category *emotion* needs to be qualified with respect to the Hebrew Scriptures. “Biblical Hebrew,” Mirguet argues, “does not organize human experience by isolating a strictly defined emotional realm. Hebrew terms usually translated by emotions in modern languages, in fact, often include actions, ritual practices, movements, and physical sensations, without demarcated boundaries.”⁴ She demonstrates that the Hebrew terms that are typically translated “love,” (אהב) “hate,” (שנא) “fear,” (ירא) and so on inherently carry a broader meaning than we would generally associate with terms we classify as emotions.⁵ One of the terms she discusses is the Hebrew word רחם, which is sometimes translated “compassion.” She contends that the term conveys more of an enduring bond than a particular emotional response to a specific situation.⁶ While this “standing quality” may contain an emotional aspect, that aspect is not an essential part of its meaning.⁷ Mirguet concludes that biblical Hebrew words that are often translated with terms denoting emotions “do not quite correspond to the linguistic space we allot to emotions in the modern languages.”⁸

Even if we were to consider terms like אהב, שנא, ירא, or רחם as conveying emotion in a sense similar to how we conceptualize emotions, the miracle stories of the Hebrew Scriptures contain very few such words. The miracles associated with Moses, Elijah, and Elisha can provide a representative case in point. A large percentage of miracle accounts from the Hebrew Scriptures falls within the narrative material surrounding these three figures. Yet, there are very few

3 For more on this, see chapter 4 of the present work.

4 Mirguet, *Early History of Compassion*, 66–67.

5 Mirguet, “‘Emotion’ in the Hebrew Bible?” 444–51.

6 Mirguet, *Early History of Compassion*, 70–73.

7 Mirguet, *Early History of Compassion*, 71, 73.

8 Mirguet, “‘Emotion’ in the Hebrew Bible?” 455.

references to the miracle worker's emotions in these accounts (whether God or a human figure). In fact, in the stories of Elijah and Elisha—the two miracle workers from the Hebrew Scriptures whose miracles most closely resemble those of Jesus—no portrayal of the miracle worker's emotional response or attitude is given.

In the miracle stories related to Moses, language connoting anger appears on several occasions, always in the context of a punitive miracle performed by God. For example, in the Song of Moses (Exod 15:1–19), the destruction of the Egyptian army in the sea is viewed as the outcome of God's "burning anger" (חַרָּה; Exod 15:7–8). The narrative material of this event (Exod 14) contains no such language, suggesting that the appearance of such language in the Song may be an instance of poetic elaboration. In a few instances in Numbers, the anger of God is connected to a punishment directed toward God's people, resulting either from their complaining or from their rebellion. In one instance, as a result of the people's complaints, God, whose "anger" (אַף) was kindled, sends fire to consume some on the outskirts of the Israelite camp (Num 11:1). Soon after, when the Israelites complain about the lack of variety in their diet (11:4–6), God responds by sending a plague, described as the result of his anger (אַף; 11:33). When Aaron and Miriam complain against God's chosen leader Moses, God strikes Miriam with leprosy, a punitive miracle that is connected in the narrative to God's anger (אַף; 12:9–10). God's anger is mentioned twice in the account of Korah's rebellion (Num 16), both times as part of Moses's assessment of God's activity. God's plan to destroy the community is seen by Moses as an overblown expression of anger (קֶצֶף) on God's part (16:22). Later in the same incident, Moses gives instructions to Aaron regarding how to stop a plague that God had sent in his anger (קֶצֶף; 16:46). Finally, after the Israelites commit apostasy at Shittim, worshipping Baal of Peor, God sends a plague that kills 24,000 people. This divine punishment is connected to God's anger (אַף; 25:3–4).

Nowhere in the miracle accounts associated with Moses, Elijah, or Elisha is a miracle performed in explicit connection with the miracle worker's compassion toward someone in need. At least these events are not described that way in the Hebrew Scriptures. The non-punitive miracle stories are told in a rather matter-of-fact manner in which the miracle worker's response consists entirely of action. How the miracle worker might feel in response to human pain or need is typically of no concern to the narrators. The ready action of the miracle workers in these stories may imply some element of concern, perhaps of pity or love. However, such emotional responses are left unstated.

It should be noted that despite this lack of "positive" emotion language in miracle accounts in the Hebrew Scriptures—and the absence of a strictly

defined emotional realm in general—the God of Israel is not viewed as aloof and unconcerned with respect to human suffering. Nor are the Hebrew Scriptures void of emotional tenor. One may read simply a small portion of the Psalms to see that this is not the case. Taken as a whole, the Hebrew Scriptures present a God who responds to the cries of his people—often in miraculous ways—and who consistently acts in covenant faithfulness.⁹ The direct involvement of God in human affairs is affirmed throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, including in the oft-repeated proclamation of God’s character:

Yahweh, Yahweh, a God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast loyalty and faithfulness, keeping steadfast loyalty for thousands [of generations], forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin but by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and fourth [generation]. (Exod 34:6–7)¹⁰

While emotion language may not play much of a role in miracle stories from the Hebrew Scriptures, an understanding of God’s beneficence and concern presumably stands in the background of the accounts of his extraordinary interventions on behalf of the faithful. As we will see throughout the remainder of this chapter, when the Hebrew Scriptures are translated into Greek and later writers begin elaborating on these stories, what may be relegated to the realm of inference is frequently stated in more explicit ways via the Greek language.

1.2 *The Greek Scriptures*

Françoise Mirguet suggests that in the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, the move into Greek “implies a reconfiguration of human experience” that allows for “a linguistic space specifically devoted to emotions.”¹¹ She contends that “responses to pain become emotions due to the change of language and the constraints of translation, within the context of a broader intellectual encounter.”¹² In other words, since the Greek language contains what could be

9 Here, we may simply point to the frequent use in the Hebrew Scriptures of the term אֱמֻנָה, which has been rendered in various ways (e.g., “steadfast love,” “loyalty,” or “faithfulness”) and essentially conveys God’s *modus operandi* with respect to his covenant with Israel.

10 See, e.g., Num 14:18; Deut 5:9–11; 7:9–10; Neh 9:17; Ps 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Jer 32:18; Joel 2:13; Jon 4:2; Nah 1:3. All translations of ancient texts are the author’s, unless otherwise noted.

11 Mirguet, *Early History of Compassion*, 64–108; quotation is from p. 79.

12 Mirguet, *Early History of Compassion*, 79.

classified as strictly emotional terms—or $\pi\acute{\alpha}\theta\eta$ —the mere process of translating Hebrew words like רַחֵם, אָהַב, and יָרָא (among others) with a corresponding Greek term of emotion will yield a more explicit emotional depiction, especially as the translators operate within a linguistic space in which emotion language is pronounced.

After analyzing the ways the Hebrew Scriptures and the Greek translation of those Scriptures convey people's responses to the pain of others, Mirguet draws the following conclusion:

[P]ity and compassion, as they are found in Judeo-Hellenistic texts, do not find their roots in the Hebrew scriptures. Despite its insistence on responding to others' pain, the Hebrew Bible rarely phrases these responses as pure emotions; indeed, the language does not have a linguistic space for a strictly emotional realm. The Greek translation of the scriptures, however, opens a conceptual space for something closer to modern emotions ($\pi\acute{\alpha}\theta\eta$). ... Pity, in the Jewish tradition, is "found in translation,"¹³ as it results from the engagement with the Greek culture; it is so to speak, a hybrid notion.¹⁴

This "hybrid notion" will be demonstrated throughout the rest of the chapter as we examine Jewish texts from the Second Temple period. Since many of these texts use the Greek Scriptures as their primary source text for miracle stories, we will be able to observe how the LXX translators sometimes introduce emotion language into their stories and also how Hellenistic Jewish writers sometimes take such notions a step further in their depictions of miracle workers.¹⁵ We begin with the two most prolific Jewish writers of the late Second Temple period, Josephus and Philo.

13 Mirguet is adopting this phrase from Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 36–54.

14 Mirguet, *Early History of Compassion*, 106–7.

15 When I refer in this study to the LXX, I am referring to the body of texts included in the Rahlfs edition of the Septuagint (*Septuaginta*, ed. Alfred Rahlfs, rev. ed., Robert Hanhart [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006]). This includes the Greek translation of the Pentateuch (the Septuagint proper), the Greek translation of the remainder of Hebrew Bible texts (often referred to as the Old Greek), and the group of texts arising in the Hellenistic period that have become incorporated in the "Septuagint" (e.g., the books of the Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon, and Judith). See the discussion of terminology in Karen H. Jobes and Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2000), 29–44.

1.3 *Josephus and Philo*

1.3.1 Josephus

The Jewish historian Josephus provides a crucially important glimpse into both the Jewish and the Greco-Roman world of the first century. Among his extant writings is the *Antiquities of the Jews*, completed near the end of the first century CE, which provides a retelling of biblical events and traces Jewish history up to his own time. Eric Eve states that Josephus's "extensive retelling of biblical narratives shows how biblical miracles were understood by some Jews of his time, and his account of post-biblical history gives us the fullest indication we have outside the New Testament of first-century Jewish willingness to believe in contemporary miracles and miracle-workers."¹⁶ In addition to offering a window into first-century Jewish belief in miracles and miracle workers, Josephus also provides insight for understanding how miracle workers may be characterized in terms of their emotions.

The vast majority of Josephus's accounts of miracles occur in the first ten books of *Antiquities*, which constitute his retelling of the Jewish Scriptures.¹⁷ In the post-biblical material of *Antiquities*, miracles are scarce.¹⁸ Miracle stories are even rarer in the *Jewish War* and are virtually non-existent in the *Life of Josephus* and *Against Apion*.¹⁹ Every instance in Josephus of a miracle in which the miracle worker's emotion is depicted comes from within *Antiquities* 1–10. Most of these stories have a biblical precedent, so Josephus is either conveying an emotion alluded to in his Greek source text(s) or is rendering a more colorful picture of the miracle worker through the use of emotion language.

Of the nearly two dozen occurrences in which Josephus provides a depiction of the emotion(s) of a miracle worker in relation to the performance of a miracle, about half depict expressions of anger (μῆνις, χόλος, ὀργή, or cognates) and half depict expressions of pity (ἔλεος, οἶκτος, or cognates). As mentioned, most of these accounts of miracles have biblical precedents, and Josephus, in line with the LXX, often provides an explicit reference to emotion where it is absent in the Hebrew Scriptures. In the following summary of miracle stories in Josephus that include emotion language, the material is divided between stories involving anger and stories involving pity.

16 Eve, *Jewish Context*, 24.

17 According to Eve's calculation, the first ten books of *Antiquities* account for somewhere around 90 percent of the miracle stories in the whole work (*Jewish Context*, 34).

18 Eve, *Jewish Context*, 38.

19 Eve notes one recorded event in *Against Apion* 2.53–56 that could be construed as miraculous: God intervenes to thwart an elephant attack upon the Alexandrian Jews planned by Ptolemy Physcon (Eve, *Jewish Context*, 40).

1.3.1.1 *Anger and the Miracle Worker*

In every instance in *Antiquities* in which anger is linked to the performance of a miracle, God is the subject, and in every case, the miracle has a punitive function. When Pharaoh, consumed with passion, desires Sarah, God strikes him with disease—an action that is attributed to the “wrath” (μῆνις) of God (*Ant.* 1.164–165). Josephus links both the plagues on Egypt and the closing up of the Red Sea to the anger of God—his judgment on Egypt (ὀργή, 2.293; μῆνις, 2.344).²⁰ The swallowing up of Korah and sudden death of his accomplices are likewise the product of God’s anger (ὀργή, 4.60).²¹ When seventy men (non-priests) of Beth-shemesh approach the Ark of the Covenant, God strikes them down in his anger (6.16; here, emphatically, both ὀργή and χόλος are used). In a similar story, Josephus recounts Uzzah’s death, whom God killed in his anger (ὀργή) for having touched the Ark as a non-priest (7.81–82). Then, when Samuel castigates the people for requesting a king, he prays for God to display his anger (ὀργίζω) at their request, which God does by unleashing a torrential thunderstorm during the dry season (7.91–92). In the account of the plague which resulted from David’s ill-advised census, God’s anger (ὀργή) is twice referred to as the precipitating factor of the plague (7.321, 328). King Jehoram of Judah experiences the wrath of God (the words ὀργή and μῆνις are both used) in the form of a severe stomach illness which causes great agony and eventually kills him, as predicted by the prophet Elijah (9.99–104). Josephus also recounts the punishment that God brought upon the people who settled in Samaria after the northern kingdom’s exile on account of their worship of other gods. In response to their mixed devotion, God sends a plague upon them,²² bringing suffering and death, which comes to an end only by their bringing in Israelite priests to teach them how to worship God (9.288–289). This plague is described as the result of God’s anger, made emphatic through the juxtaposition of ὀργή and χόλος (as occurred in 6.16, noted above).

Each of these stories is recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures; however, in only two cases does the Hebrew text contain wording that connects an emotion with the performance of the miracle. One is the account of the drowning of the Egyptian army at the Red Sea, which as we have seen, refers to God’s anger only in the poetic Song of Moses (Exod 15:7–8). The other instance is the story

20 For Josephus, the return of the sea to its normal state is accompanied by torrential rain, thunder, lightning, and overwhelming darkness. All these wonders of nature are attributed to God’s wrath.

21 As noted above, the Hebrew text of Numbers 16 conveys God’s angry response in the events connected with Korah’s rebellion, but such language is not used directly in relation to Korah being swallowed up by the earth, as here.

22 In the biblical account, God sends lions, which kill some of the people (2 Kgs 17:24–28).

of Uzzah's death. The Hebrew text describes Uzzah's death as resulting from God's anger (78, 2 Sam 6:7; 1 Chr 13:10). In the LXX version of the Song of Moses, both ὀργή (Exod 15:7) and θυμός (15:8) are used, offering a slightly more colorful picture through variety. In the Uzzah incident, the LXX renders the Hebrew term with θυμός. In all the other instances in which Josephus describes the anger of the miracle worker, the LXX follows the Hebrew text in not including explicit emotion language. Josephus thus offers a depiction of the miracle worker (in each case God) infused with greater emotion than is present in either the Hebrew Scriptures or the LXX, at least with respect to the portrayal of anger.

1.3.1.2 *Pity and the Miracle Worker*

The miracle stories in Josephus's *Antiquities* that are associated with pity are mostly concerned with either a healing or deliverance from some plight. These miracles are performed by God himself, with one exception—the increasing of oil performed by Elisha on behalf of a widow (9.47–50). In these stories, God's pity is often the direct response of the prayers of his people. The first of these miracle stories occurs in book 2 of *Antiquities*, but the remaining miracle stories connected with pity occur in books 7–10, with half occurring in book 10.

Early in his *Antiquities*, Josephus introduces an extrabiblical interaction between God and Amram, the father of Moses (2.210–216). Amram, concerned about the future of the Israelites and the upcoming birth of a child in light of Pharaoh's decree that all Israelite boys born in Egypt were to be killed, prays, asking God to take pity (οἶκτος, 2.211) on the Israelites. God responds to Amram's prayer by taking pity (ἐλέεω, 2.212) on him, demonstrated through his appearance to Amram in a dream. God then outlines for Amram his plans for Moses and for the deliverance of his people from Egypt.

A similar pattern of a petitioner requesting pity followed by the granting of the request through God's intervention is followed in two other accounts in *Antiquities*. In 7.294–297, David asks God to take pity (ἐλέεω, 7.294) upon his people during a time of famine, namely by revealing its cause. Through prophets, God responds by informing David that the cause of the famine was Saul's killing of the Gibeonites in violation of a treaty made during Joshua's time. God prescribes the appropriate compensation to be given to the Gibeonites. Upon David making the payment, the Israelites are delivered from the famine. Then in 10.12, Hezekiah appeals to God through Isaiah to take pity (ἐλέεω) upon his people following Sennacherib's threats against Jerusalem. God responds by revealing through Isaiah that Sennacherib's army would be defeated without a battle and that Sennacherib himself would be killed upon returning to his own land. The unfolding of these events is recounted in 10.21–23.

Josephus's account of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and Daniel's subsequent interpretation in 10.195–210 contains three references to God's pity. When Daniel hears of the death sentence imposed upon the wise men of Babylon by the king, he spends a night beseeching God to come to their aid. God responds by taking pity (ἐλέεω, 10.200) on the condemned, revealing the dream and its interpretation to Daniel, who then reports this good news to his close companions, with specific reference to God's pity (ἐλεος, 10.202). Then, at the beginning of his message to the king, Daniel again attributes his awareness of the dream to God's taking pity (ἐλέεω, 10.203) on the wise men.

In another account based on the book of Daniel, Josephus links Nebuchadnezzar's restoration to "a human way of living" from "a way of living ... of beasts" to God's pity (ἐλέεω, 10.242), extended to him after "many supplications and entreaties."²³ Thus, even a pagan king could be the recipient of God's pity as a result of fervent prayer.

God's pity similarly plays a role in an account of the raising of the dead in Book 8 of *Antiquities* and in a healing story in Book 10. In 8.325–327, Josephus offers his version of the raising of the widow of Zarephath's son. Elijah reacts to the anguish of the widow upon the death of her son by crying out to God, asking him to revive the woman's son. God takes pity (κατοικτεῖρω, 8.327) on the woman and brings the child back to life.²⁴ In 10.24–29, Josephus recounts the story of Hezekiah's illness and subsequent healing. Upon realizing the grave nature of his illness, Hezekiah appeals to God to give him additional time to live. God takes pity (ἐλέεω, 10.27) on him and heals him, extending his life for fifteen years.

One final instance in the *Antiquities* in which a miracle worker's emotion is depicted merits special attention due to the emotion language being attached not to God but to a human character, Elisha. Josephus recounts the biblical story in which Elisha provides for a widow of one of the prophets through the miraculous increase of her oil supply (9.47–50). When the woman comes to Elisha, she asks him to take pity (ἐλέεω, 9.48) on her and help her in recognition of the good deeds done by her husband. Elisha acquiesces to her request and gives her instructions for collecting the abundance of oil God was going to provide for her. While Josephus clarifies that it was God who filled the vessels with oil (9.49), it is Elisha from whom the woman requests pity, and it is Elisha's pity that brings about the miraculous intervention.

²³ *Ant.* 10.242 (Marcus, LCL).

²⁴ Josephus notes a second motivation for God to perform the miracle: the defense of the prophet's integrity (the widow had accused Elijah of coming to her to do harm).

In each of these accounts, with the exception of the story of Daniel interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Josephus adds the explicit emotion language to the depiction of the miracle worker—typically God. In the Aramaic text of the Daniel story, Daniel informs his friends of the dire situation (their impending execution) in order that they might seek מִחֻנָּן (“mercies” or “compassion”)²⁵ from God (Dan 2:18). The LXX translates this word with οἰκτιρμός (“pity” or “compassion”). In Josephus's account, Daniel's prayer does not include any allusion to God's pity or compassion, but God's response is described in such terms (ἐλεέω/ ἔλεος). Otherwise, the accounts of these miracle stories in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts lack an explicit portrayal of the miracle worker's emotional response. Taken together, the miracle stories of Josephus thus demonstrate a relatively frequent attempt by Josephus to bring more emotion to the characterization of the miracle worker. Explicit emotional responses that are typically absent in miracle stories in the Hebrew Scriptures and that are also seldom found in the LXX appear often in Josephus's accounts of those same stories. Mirguet has also observed this pattern regarding Josephus's use of emotions: “Josephus often enriches the emotional life of his protagonists. Characters are portrayed according to the way that they handle emotions, and their actions are explained by emotional dispositions.”²⁶

1.3.2 Philo

Philo of Alexandria's extensive corpus of Hellenistic Jewish writings stems from the first half of the first century CE. While many of his works are allegorical in nature, expressing particular philosophical concerns, Philo also composed a number of more literal expositions of biblical stories, focusing especially on the Pentateuch.²⁷ We find in these expositions a treatment of biblical miracle stories, most prominently from the exodus narrative in Philo's work *On the Life of Moses*.²⁸ Philo writes on several miracle stories from before the exodus narrative in some of his other works (e.g., *On the Creation of the World*, *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, *On the Life of Abraham*) but offers no discussion of miracle stories from after the Pentateuchal period.²⁹ Of all these works, only

25 The Aramaic word here corresponds to the Hebrew מִחֻנָּן.

26 Mirguet, *Early History of Compassion*, 38.

27 Eve, *Jewish Context*, 53.

28 Eve, *Jewish Context*, 65.

29 Eve, *Jewish Context*, 72–74. Eve mentions the possible exception of Philo's depiction of the translation of Scripture into Greek (*Moses* 2.37–40) but concludes that the way it is described differs from Philo's other accounts of miracles and reads more like “prophetic inspiration” (Eve, *Jewish Context*, 74 n29).

On the Life of Moses and *On the Life of Abraham* provide instances where the depiction of emotions features in a miracle account.

1.3.2.1 On the Life of Moses

1.101–125. In his treatment of the Ten Plagues, Philo offers a division of the plagues based on the agent who acts to initiate the plague (*Moses* 1.97). Three of the plagues are performed through the agency of Aaron, three through Moses, one through both Moses and Aaron, and three through the direct activity of God. The halting of two of the plagues is connected by Philo to the experience of “pity” on the part of the miracle worker. After seven days of devastation resulting from the turning of the Nile’s water to blood, the Egyptians appeal to Moses, who in turn appeals to God to “take pity” (οἶκτον λαβεῖν, 1.101) on those who are perishing. In response, “He whose nature is to show mercy” (ὁ δὲ τὴν φύσιν ἰλεως, 1.101) restores the water. Whereas in the account of this event from the Hebrew Scriptures and the LXX (Exod 7:14–25), in which the second plague immediately follows after the first (with no record of the water’s restoration), Philo includes this healing of the Nile as part of the miraculous activity of God and as an action that stems from his emotional response to the supplicants.³⁰

The plague of darkness, which Philo attempts to explain through unusual natural phenomena (such as a lengthy eclipse), brings, according to Philo, not only a loss of sight but a suppression of other senses as well, as the people are too overwhelmed to speak, hear, and eat. Philo thus again seems to exacerbate the devastation brought on by the plagues. And once again, while the biblical account mentions the length of the plague (three days) but does not explicate the ending of the plague itself (Exod 10:21–29), Philo indicates that the ending of the plague was the result of “pity” and the subsequent, direct activity of God. The pity in this case, however, is felt by Moses, who “taking pity beseeches God” (λαβὼν οἶκτον ἵκετεύει τὸν θεόν, 1.125). God then causes the darkness to give way to light.

Both these scenes constitute elaboration by Philo with respect to the biblical accounts, and as such, his inclusion of emotion language in the portrayal of the miracle worker does not have a biblical precedent.

1.196–202. Here Philo recounts God’s provision of manna to the Israelites in the wilderness. In the biblical account (Exod 16), the complaining of the

³⁰ The effects of this first plague are more devastating in Philo’s account. In the biblical story, the Egyptians are able to find drinkable water through digging; in Philo, even the water they dig up becomes tainted, and people begin dying of thirst. The more dramatic ending of the plague in Philo thus corresponds to the comparatively heightened seriousness of the situation.

Israelites is immediately followed by God's instructions to Moses regarding the food and his action in supplying them with food. Philo expounds upon the reaction of both Moses and God to the Israelites' complaints. Moses, who was initially angry at their unstable judgment—that after all they had experienced, they would fail to trust God—turns to forgiveness as he recognizes the greatness of their being afflicted by hunger. Philo then depicts God's response of pity: "God, having taken pity, healed the suffering" (ὁ θεὸς ἐλεήσας τὸ πάθος ἰάται, 1.198). Philo describes three motivations for this response of pity: God's benevolent nature, his desire to honor Moses, and his intention to display Moses's piety before the people. The result of God's pity is the supply of food from heaven, an event Philo highlights as miraculous by contrasting the natural method of humanity to produce food from the ground and God's non-subservience to the laws of nature.

2.279–283. In a section on the prophetic role of Moses, Philo uses the story of Korah's rebellion to highlight the power of Moses's prophetic words. Upon learning of the displeasure of Korah and his co-conspirators, Moses is filled with "righteous anger" (δικαίαν ὀργήν, *Mos.* 2.279). Moses then, "still boiling and burning with lawful indignation" (2.280), utters a prophetic declaration, which includes a vision of the destruction of the rebellious ones.³¹ As he stops speaking, his words come true, and the earth swallows up some while lightning strikes others. In the biblical account (Num 16:1–35), God is more directly involved in the condemnation and judgment of Korah and the others. Here, Philo emphasizes Moses's power as a prophet, concluding that this incident demonstrates Moses's fame and godliness. As a divinely ordained prophet, Moses's anger, and the events which result from that anger, are shown to be just.

1.3.2.2 On the Life of Abraham

In his treatise on Abraham, Philo twice connects the experience of pity with the performance of miracles, and in both cases, these references to pity come in contexts where one would not expect such feelings. In the first instance (*Abraham* 92–98), Philo relays the story of Abraham and Sarah's sojourn to Egypt during a famine, in which Pharaoh, recognizing Sarah's beauty, brings

31 In the biblical account (Num 16), Moses expresses anger (הָרָה, "burning" or "kindling" with anger) after learning of the rebellious behavior of Korah and his associates. This corresponds with Philo's first mention of Moses's anger in this story. However, in the biblical account, the result of Moses's anger is the request that God not accept the offering of the rebels, and his anger is not as directly connected with the later miracle (the swallowing up of Korah).

her into his palace. In addition to the removal of the deceptive activity of Abraham in hiding the fact that Sarah is his wife, Philo's version differs from the biblical account (Gen 12:10–20) in its expansion of the treatment of the plagues which befall Pharaoh and his household. Philo emphasizes the torturous nature of the affliction God brings upon Pharaoh, highlighting the plight and desperation of the suffering monarch. And all this is seen as the result of God's pity (οἶκτος, 96) on Abraham.

The second instance appears in Philo's account of the destruction of Sodom. As in the biblical account (Gen 19:1–29), God sends fire from heaven and the town is completely burned, an act of judgment upon the town for the people's wickedness. But in *On the Life of Abraham*, God's judgment is preceded by God's emotional reaction to what was taking place in Sodom. Interestingly, the emotion attributed to God is not anger, as might be expected prior to an act of calamitous judgment. Rather, God is portrayed as having pity (οἶκτος, *Abraham* 137) on humanity. For Philo, the destruction of an entire town can be viewed as an act of pity in that it helps ensure that procreation continues, through the sexual relationship between men and women (i.e., what is, for Philo, "according to nature," [κατὰ φύσιν, 137]).³² God is thus seen as intervening on behalf of humanity by preventing the spread of corrupting, unnatural activities that cause sterility.³³

In each of these narratives (from both *On the Life of Moses* and *On the Life of Abraham*), Philo adds a depiction of the miracle worker's emotion that is not explicit in the corresponding biblical accounts. Such depictions contribute to a portrayal of God as intimately concerned for the welfare of his chosen servants on the one hand and of all humanity on the other. Philo's inclusion of emotion language in these accounts is in line with the tendency of Josephus to bring in such language in the depictions of the biblical story's characters. However, whereas Josephus's additions generally fall within the parameters of the biblical narrative's structure, Philo's added emotion language is often inserted in a place where he is offering extrabiblical material, as for example in his accounts of the halting of individual Egyptian plagues.

1.4 *Rewritten Scripture*

Several Second Temple Jewish texts provide a rewritten account of the biblical narrative (or a portion thereof). Examples of texts often considered rewritten Scripture include, along with Josephus's *Jewish Antiquities*, Pseudo-Philo's

³² See Eve, *Jewish Context*, 76–77.

³³ See Philo, *Abraham* 135–136.

Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum, *Jubilees*, and the *Genesis Apocryphon*.³⁴ Like *Antiquities*, each of these texts contain miracle stories. Many of these stories echo their parallel accounts in the Hebrew Scriptures, though occasionally, these texts introduce miracle stories not found in the Hebrew Scriptures.³⁵ I have also chosen to include in this section the *Exagōgē* by Ezekiel the Tragedian, even though it is typically left out of the discussion of rewritten Scripture texts. The *Exagōgē* is a dramatization of the exodus narrative that includes some extrabiblical material.

1.4.1 Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*

Pseudo-Philo presents a version of the biblical narrative from Adam to the death of Saul. Its author is unknown, though the work was at one time erroneously attributed to Philo of Alexandria.³⁶ *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (hereafter *LAB*) is generally dated to the late first century CE.³⁷ It is extant only in Latin, though a majority of scholars are convinced that it is a translation from a Greek version of a Hebrew original.³⁸ According to Eve's counting, Pseudo-Philo includes three miracles from the patriarchal period, eleven from the exodus–wilderness period, two from Joshua, twelve from the period of the judges, and five that are linked to David and Saul.³⁹ Of these thirty-three miracle stories, only two contain an explicit portrayal of the emotion of the miracle worker.

34 See Geza Vermes, "Bible Interpretation at Qumran," *Erlsr* 20 (1989): 185–88; Philip Alexander, "Retelling the Old Testament," in *It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture*, ed. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988): 99–100.

35 For an example of the former, see the account of the parting of the Red Sea and the provision of manna and quail in the wilderness in *LAB* 10. For an example of the latter, see the story of the binding of demons resulting from Noah's prayer in *Jubilees* 10:1–14.

36 Eve, *Jewish Context*, 117.

37 Some argue for a pre-70 CE date, e.g., Daniel J. Harrington, "Pseudo-Philo," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011; 1st edition, New York: Doubleday, 1983), 299; Frederick J. Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo: Rewriting the Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 6. Others argue for a date after the destruction of the temple, e.g., George W. E. Nickelsburg, "The Bible Rewritten and Expanded," in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, ed. Michael E. Stone (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 109; Howard Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, AGJU 31, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 199–210.

38 See Harrington, "Pseudo-Philo," 298–99; Jacobson, *Commentary*, 222–24.

39 Eve, *Jewish Context*, 127–28.

1.4.1.1 LAB 10.2–6

In this section, Pseudo-Philo gives a version of the crossing of the Red Sea. The basic outline of Pseudo-Philo's story follows the biblical narrative: (1) the Egyptians pursue the Israelites, (2) the Israelites cry out to Moses, who in turn cries out to God, (3) God instructs Moses to extend his staff over the water, (4) God parts the sea, (5) the Israelites pass through on dry ground, and (6) God covers the Egyptians with the sea. When he narrates the parting of the sea, Pseudo-Philo begins embellishing with language seemingly adopted from Psalm 18:15 ("the depths of the earth were visible, and the foundations of the world were laid bare"), and the miracle is attributed to the "breath of the anger [*ira*] of the LORD" (LAB 10.5). This language also appears to stem from Psalm 18:15, which refers to the "blast of the breath of [God's] nostrils."⁴⁰ The celebratory Song of Moses may also be in view here, with its reference to the "burning anger" of God (חרן, Exod 15:7).⁴¹ Aside from the dramatic language of 10.5, the event is narrated in straightforward fashion. There is nothing else in Pseudo-Philo's narrative to suggest that God was angry with the Egyptians at this point; rather, the focus throughout—as it is in the biblical narrative—is on the deliverance he provides his people. The reference to God's anger seems to arise simply out of the author's familiarity with his biblical source materials, which, in distinction from the Hebrew Scriptures, he incorporates within the narrative itself.

1.4.1.2 LAB 16.1–7

Here, Pseudo-Philo relates the rebellion and subsequent punishment of Korah and his followers (see Num 16). The displeasure of Korah toward Moses receives the immediate response, "God was angry (*iratus*)" (LAB 16.2). God then announces that, just as the earth swallowed up the blood of Abel, it would swallow up Korah and those who joined with him—which happens shortly thereafter. As discussed earlier, in the biblical story it is first Moses who is "angry" (חרה, Num 16:15). Then, when God responds to Moses and Aaron, he indicates that he would consume the whole assembly, an action viewed by Moses and Aaron as an overextension of God's anger (קצף, Num 16:22). Later in Numbers 16, when God again tells Moses and Aaron that he would consume the whole assembly of Israelites for their continued rebellion, Moses gives Aaron instructions about appeasing God's "wrath" (קצף, Num 16:46). While the appearance of God's anger is made explicit at the outset of the account in

40 The LXX has πνεύματος ὀργῆς σου ("breath of your anger").

41 Once again, the LXX translates the Hebrew here with ὀργή.

LAB, its inclusion is still likely a reflection of the miracle story from the biblical account.⁴² Once again, *LAB* seems simply to adopt the language that was present in the source material. Where it differs from the biblical versions of these stories is in its placing of the emotion language more prominently within the narratives of these two miracles.

1.4.2 *Jubilees*

The book of *Jubilees* survives in full only in an Ethiopic version.⁴³ There are fragments of a Greek text, a Syriac text, and a Latin text.⁴⁴ The discovery of Hebrew fragments of *Jubilees* at Qumran rendered conclusive the argument, put forward perhaps most forcefully by R. H. Charles, that *Jubilees* was originally written in Hebrew.⁴⁵ The Qumran discovery also helped to date *Jubilees* securely around the mid-second century BCE.⁴⁶ The fact that we have little of the Hebrew or Greek text complicates our ability to identify precisely the potential emotion language in the miracle stories narrated.⁴⁷ However, it seems that two such narratives contain wording pertinent to the present discussion.

1.4.2.1 *Jubilees 10:7–14*

In this passage, we find an extrabiblical account about Noah that relates to the Watchers myth.⁴⁸ According to the story, sometime after the flood, the demonic spirits which had descended from the Watchers began leading astray and physically harming Noah's grandchildren. After Noah's sons shared this information with their father, Noah prayed for God's intervention. Following Noah's appeal, God assigns his angels the task of binding the demons. The chief of the evil spirits, Mastema, asks God to leave some of the demons under his

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- 42 Frederick Murphy, "Korah's Rebellion in Pseudo-Philo 16," in *Of Scribes and Scrolls: Studies on the Hebrew Bible, Intertestamental Judaism, and Christian Origins*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, John J. Collins, and Thomas H. Tobin (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 114, has noted that *LAB* turns what in the Bible is a struggle between Moses and Korah into a battle between God and Korah. Hence the fronting of God's anger.
- 43 O. S. Wintermute, "Jubilees," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011; 1st edition, New York: Doubleday, 1983), 42.
- 44 Wintermute, "Jubilees," 42.
- 45 Wintermute, "Jubilees," 43; James C. VanderKam, *A Commentary on the Book of Jubilees Chapters 1–21*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2018), 4.
- 46 Wintermute, "Jubilees," 43–44; see also the discussion of dating in VanderKam, *Commentary*, 28–38.
- 47 It is presumed that the Ethiopic version was translated from Greek, which itself was a translation of the Hebrew original (James C. VanderKam, *Textual and Historical Studies in the Book of Jubilees*, Harvard Semitic Monograph 14 [Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977, vi]).
- 48 See 1 Enoch 15 for the probable background of this story.

jurisdiction. God assents to Mastema's request, leaving a tenth of the demons under Mastema's authority to cause continued torment on the earth. The angels then teach Noah the art of healing via herbs, which they had acquired from the bound demons.

In Noah's intercession for his children and grandchildren, he appeals to God's mercy or pity (Ethiopic, *šāhl*),⁴⁹ twice recalling the mercy God had shown in delivering him and his family during the flood (10.3). Noah hopes that God will display similar mercy in the present situation.⁵⁰ One may speculate that the Greek term underlying the notion of mercy (or pity) here is ἔλεος, which in turn may correspond to the Hebrew רַחֵם.⁵¹ Unfortunately, this passage is not included in the extant Greek or Hebrew fragments,⁵² so we cannot be conclusive on this point.

1.4.2.2 Jubilees 28:9–24

The second text from *Jubilees* which may contain emotion language in relation to the working of a miracle comes in the context of the barren Rachel becoming able to conceive. Here, the narrative corresponds closely to the biblical account (Gen 29:28–30:24), with the main differences being in *Jubilees*'s inclusion of dates for each of the births, the omission of the meanings of each child's name, and the absence of the mandrake story. At the very end of the account, the narrator states, "And the LORD *had mercy* [Ethiopic, *tašāhalā*]⁵³ upon Rachel and opened her womb. And she conceived" (*Jub.* 28:24).⁵⁴ Again, this passage is not found in any of the extant Greek and Hebrew fragments of *Jubilees*, so we are left to speculate regarding the terminology behind it.⁵⁵

We may note, however, that the parallel biblical passage says, "Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb" (Gen 30:22).

49 The definition of this Ethiopic term, according to Wolf Leslau, *Comparative Dictionary of Ge'ez* (Weisbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), 528, is: "grace, compassion, clemency, favor, mercy, pardon, kindness, gentleness." I am indebted to Dr. James Nati for identifying this Ethiopic term and providing the reference to Leslau.

50 So VanderKam, *Commentary*, 401–2, states that when Noah recalls the flood he "focuses on the divine mercy shown to him and his sons." Noah then "asks the God who had been so gracious to him to extend that mercy to his grandchildren."

51 The LXX most frequently renders רַחֵם with ἔλεος, including seven of the eleven occurrences of רַחֵם in Genesis (the other four occurrences are rendered with δικαιόσυνη).

52 VanderKam, *Commentary*, 398.

53 This Ethiopic term is a verbal form of the same root that occurs in 10.3. Again, I am indebted to Dr. James Nati for this information.

54 Translation taken from Wintermute, "Jubilees," 110 (emphasis mine).

55 There is an extant Latin text for this passage, and the word used here is a form of the verb *misereo*.

Neither the Genesis account nor the account of Jubilees describes the content of an appeal to God from Rachel. In fact, in both accounts, Rachel's position is recorded as one of defiance toward Jacob for not giving her sons. Yet, in both passages, God is portrayed as showing concern for Rachel, and he grants her (implicit) request of him. The addition of "mercy" language in the Jubilees account at this point perhaps simply makes more explicit God's concern. The fact that the author of Jubilees does not include such language in the accounts of other biblical miracles (e.g., the account of the exodus miracles in *Jub.* 48) could point against the notion that this is an intentional tendency of the author, though the sparse number of miracles relayed in Jubilees does not provide a sufficient sample size to affirm this conclusion.⁵⁶

1.4.3 *Genesis Apocryphon* (1QapGen)

Parts of twenty-two columns have survived of this Aramaic text discovered in Cave 1 at Qumran.⁵⁷ The scroll itself has been dated to the late first century BCE or early first century CE,⁵⁸ though a recent study suggests that the Aramaic of the text points to an origination of the *Genesis Apocryphon* in the second century BCE.⁵⁹ The recovered text begins in the antediluvian period with a description of the Watchers' activities and goes on to narrate stories in the life of Noah and Abram.

1.4.3.1 Gen. Apoc. 19–20

This well-preserved section of text tells the story of Abram and Sarai's sojourn in Egypt during a famine. The account is an expanded version of the biblical narrative (Gen 19:10–20). The author seems concerned with providing broader context for Abram's lie about Sarai's relationship to him: Abram's dubious plan was the result of an ominous dream. This account also "clarifies" that Pharaoh was miraculously prevented from touching Sarai during the entirety of her time in the harem—a detail left ambiguous at best in the biblical narrative. Of particular interest for our purposes, the version told in the *Genesis Apocryphon*

56 In addition to the exodus miracles of *Jub.* 48, Eve (*Jewish Context*, 157–61) lists six miracles in *Jubilees*.

57 For this text, I am using the translation of Edward M. Cook in Michael O. Wise, Martin G. Abegg Jr., and Edward M. Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2005).

58 James VanderKam and Peter Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2002), 30; Daniel A. Machiela, *The Dead Sea Genesis Apocryphon: A New Text and Translation with Introduction and Special Treatment of Columns 13–17*, *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah* 79 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 137.

59 Machiela, *Genesis Apocryphon*, 140.

includes a section in which a distraught Abram pleads for God's help in preserving the purity of his wife, which results in God sending a "pestilential spirit." Then, after the unsuccessful attempts of Egypt's physicians and magicians to cure Pharaoh, one of Pharaoh's officials has a dream about Abram, which leads to his sending for Abram's aid. Abram, now known by the Egyptians as Sarai's husband, prays for Pharaoh and lays his hands on him, driving away the evil spirit. So in addition to exonerating and magnifying Abram and Sarai, the *Genesis Apocryphon* embellishes the miraculous element of the story (the biblical account simply says "the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues").

Along with the heightened sense of God's miraculous protection, the account includes a depiction of Abram's emotional state after Sarai is taken away. Before his prayer, Abram "wept bitterly." During the prayer, he spoke to God "through sorrow and streaming tears." The prayer itself is an appeal to God's mercy or pity, though no explicit emotion language is used. Following the prayer, Abram "wept and was deeply troubled." In response, that very night God sent a spirit to afflict Pharaoh, an ongoing affliction that prevented him from even touching Sarai. The sense of the narrative suggests that God responded directly and immediately with pity to the emotional appeal of the suffering Abram.

1.4.4 Ezekiel the Tragedian's *Exagōgē*

The *Exagōgē* tells the story of the Israelite exodus in the form of a Greek tragic drama.⁶⁰ The extant text comes from citations in Eusebius, Clement of Alexandria, and Pseudo-Eustathius.⁶¹ The fragments exist in iambic pentameter, which points to Greek as the original language. The date for the work can be fixed between the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek (around the mid-third century BCE), of which Ezekiel shows knowledge, and the composition of Alexander Polyhistor's *Concerning the Jews* (first century BCE), which serves as Eusebius's source for the excerpts of the *Exagōgē*.⁶² R. G. Robertson suggests the early second century BCE as a plausible date of composition.⁶³

60 R. G. Robertson, "Ezekiel the Tragedian," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011; 1st edition, New York: Doubleday, 1983), 803.

61 Robertson, "Ezekiel the Tragedian," 803.

62 Robertson, "Ezekiel the Tragedian," 803–4.

63 Robertson, "Ezekiel the Tragedian," 803–4; see also the discussion of dating in Howard Jacobson, *Exagoge of Ezekiel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 5–13, who places its composition more generally in the second century BCE.

Ezekiel's dramatization of the burning bush story includes the two signs God gives to Moses to confirm his message: the turning of Moses's staff into a serpent and the temporary leprosy found on Moses's hand (see Exod 4:1–8). In the biblical narrative, Moses's reaction to his staff turning into a serpent is simply to flee from it (Exod 4:3). In the *Exagōgē*, Moses expresses dread (he is φοβερός) and pleads, “Be merciful (ὀκτείρον) to me!” God then instructs Moses about picking up the serpent, which returns to the form of a staff (line 125). The basic narrative echoes the storyline of the biblical text, but we see a more colorful description of Moses's reaction—an embellishment that is unsurprising given the genre of the work as a tragic drama.

The texts of rewritten Scripture examined in this section embellish the biblical narratives, and as we have seen, these embellishments sometimes include the emotional response of a miracle worker. While *LAB* seems to adopt material from other biblical texts (e.g., Psalms) in expanding the details of a miracle story, *Jubilees*, the *Genesis Apocryphon*, and the *Exagōgē* offer their own creative expansions of the biblical stories. The condition of the extant texts of these works and the lack of original-language copies presents difficulty in identifying the precise emotion language employed (with the exception of the *Exagōgē*, which is extant in Greek). However, taken together, these excerpts demonstrate attempts to present a fuller portrayal of the miracle workers' emotional responses to situations of distress, in line with what we observed in Josephus and Philo. These texts appear ready to adopt Greek emotion terms to fill out a more vivid picture of how miracle workers may respond to human circumstances.

1.5 *Wisdom Texts*

Based on the wisdom literature of the Hebrew Bible, one might not expect to find many miracle stories within this genre of texts. However, both the Wisdom of Solomon and Sirach, “the two great examples of post-biblical Second Temple wisdom literature,”⁶⁴ contain numerous references to biblical miracles.

1.5.1 *Wisdom of Solomon*

The Wisdom of Solomon is widely considered to have been composed in Greek.⁶⁵ There is a growing consensus that it was written sometime between the late first century BCE and the first century CE.⁶⁶ Written in a context in which

64 Eve, *Jewish Context*, 86.

65 Eve, *Jewish Context*, 87; Jobes and Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint*, 32.

66 Eve, *Jewish Context*, 87; see also, David Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 43 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1979), 20–25;

many Jewish people were seeking to maintain their faith amid Hellenization, Wisdom contains miracle stories that tend to focus on the punishment of the wicked and the protection of the righteous.⁶⁷ This punishment/reward model lends itself readily to an emphasis on miracles from the exodus narrative, which is what we see in Wisdom. Four of the miracle stories relayed in Wisdom—all reflecting the exodus-wilderness period—include a description of the emotions of the miracle worker.

1.5.1.1 *Wisdom 11:1–14*

In this passage, the author recounts the story in which God miraculously provides water from a rock during the Israelites' time in the wilderness shortly after the exodus. This divine assistance is placed in stark contrast to the punishment the Egyptians received in the transformation of the Nile's water to blood. Whereas the Egyptians were rebuked, condemned, and tormented through a water miracle, the Israelites were the beneficiaries of a water miracle. Through their experience of want followed by provision, the Israelites learned of God's "mercy" or "pity" (ἐλεος, 11:9). Meanwhile, the Egyptians' punishment was the result of God's anger (ὀργή, 11:9). For the author of Wisdom, those who follow God and his way of wisdom can expect divine mercy, while those who follow the way of folly and wickedness can expect divine wrath.

1.5.1.2 *Wisdom 16:5–14*

Here, the author gives an account of the story in which poisonous snakes attack the Israelites in the wilderness, causing a number of deaths until, following God's instructions, Moses fashions a bronze snake. When the afflicted look upon this bronze snake, their lives are preserved (see Num 21:4–9). Wisdom casts the story more positively in comparison to the story in Numbers by asserting that it served the purposes of warning the people and reminding them of God's law. Once again, the Israelites are contrasted with the Egyptians. Whereas the Egyptians were not rescued when they were attacked in the plagues, the Israelites received deliverance from their malady (through the symbol of the serpent). The account in Wisdom also makes clear that God alone is responsible for the healing from the poisonous snakes, lest anyone think the bronze serpent itself carried such power.

Lester L. Grabbe, *Wisdom of Solomon*, T&T Clark Study Guides (London: T&T Clark, 1997), 87–90; John J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 179.

67 See Winston, *Wisdom*, 63–64; see also Eve, *Jewish Context*, 96–97.

The account in Numbers describes the stages of this event in a rather straightforward fashion: The people grumble, God responds by sending the snakes, the people confess their sin, Moses prays, God has Moses set up the bronze serpent, and the people live. Wisdom, meanwhile, attributes emotions to God, which provide motivation for his actions. The incursion of poisonous snakes is explicitly the result of God's wrath (ὀργή, 16:5)—though the author's point is that the wrath is temporary, unlike the wrath expressed in God's punishment of Israel's enemies. The provision of healing from the venomous bites is viewed as being the result of God's mercy or pity (ἔλεος, 16:10). Overall, in comparison to the account in Numbers, the version in Wisdom portrays God as more intentional and intimate in his involvement in these events, displaying emotion in response to his people's circumstances.

1.5.1.3 *Wisdom 18:20–25*

The author relays the story of the plague experienced by the Israelites following their discontent at the outcome of the Korah incident (see Num 16). The plague is only assuaged by Aaron's carrying a lighted censer in the midst of the people, described in the biblical account as an act of atonement (Num 16:41–50). Aside from the lack of context given for the plague in the Wisdom version, the main difference with the biblical account is the accentuated role given to Aaron. In the Hebrew Bible, it is Moses's idea to take a lighted censer and move about throughout the assembly. In Wisdom, it is similarly a fully human action that mollifies God's anger, but here, all credit is given to Aaron.

In neither account is the emotional state of Aaron or Moses part of the description. However, in both accounts, the punitive miracle (the onset of the plague) is described as an act of divine wrath. The biblical account states, "Wrath (ἡζα; ὀργή in the LXX) has gone out from the LORD; the plague has begun" (Num 16:46). The wording suggests the possibility that "wrath" is an entity of its own, sent from God to be the agent of punishment. This notion seems to be picked up by the author of Wisdom. In Wisdom 18:20–25, God is not specifically mentioned, but "wrath" (or "anger") appears five times (ὀργή in 18:20, 23, 25; θυμός in 18:21; χόλος in 18:22⁶⁸) as a sort of agent that is resisted by Aaron's action. This is especially the case in 18:22–23, where it says that Aaron "conquered the wrath" and "held back the wrath." Furthermore, the author ascribes the same role to wrath that is given to "the avenger" (18:22) and "the destroyer" (18:25), both of whom are brought under Aaron's control. One may

68 The term χόλος, in a physical sense, refers to a person's gall or bile. However, it was typically rendered metaphorically to describe the emotion that was considered to arise due to an excess of such fluid, namely, anger (LSJ, s.v., "χόλος").

wonder if the author of *Wisdom* was squeamish at the idea that a human (Aaron) could somehow, by his decisive action, stay the God of Israel. Perhaps it was more palatable to concede Aaron's success if the bringer of the plague was merely an agent of God. Regardless, in this passage, while the "wrath" is undoubtedly to be understood as an expression of God's perspective, the personified role of wrath as an actor in the story takes center stage. In other words, the focus is less on the portrayal of God's emotion and more on the need to find a way to stop this vengeful force.

1.5.1.4 *Wisdom 19:1–5*

Here the author alludes to the destruction of the Egyptian army at the Red Sea. The author has juxtaposed this allusion with the passage just discussed (18:20–25) to once again bring out the contrast between the temporary nature of punitive acts directed toward the Israelites and the permanence of those directed against God's enemies. Whereas through the action of Aaron, the Israelites' suffering of the plague in the wilderness was able to end, the Egyptians had no such opportunity for relief. God's punishment in their case was irreversible. Hence the author states, "The ungodly [in contrast to the Israelites] were assailed to the end by pitiless anger" (Wis 19:1). The fate of the Egyptian army "filled up the punishment their torments lacked" (19:4). The expression "pitiless anger" (ἀνελεήμων θυμός) furthers the contrast with the Israelites' experience of the halting of wrath even though, in 18:20–25, there is no explicit mention of God's pity. Regardless, the divergent prospects for the mitigation of divine punishment are clear.

1.5.2 *Sirach*

The *Wisdom of Yeshua ben Sira* was written in Hebrew in the early second century BCE.⁶⁹ As the prologue to the Greek version, typically referred to as *Sirach*, indicates, the author's grandson translated the work into Greek after arriving in Egypt during the thirty-eighth year of the reign of Euergetes, which was 132 BCE.⁷⁰ The translation was probably completed in the last couple decades of the first century BCE.⁷¹ Only the Greek version survives in its entirety, though about two-thirds of the Hebrew text is extant.⁷² Most of *Sirach* is unconcerned with the miraculous, but two sections, the discourse on the role of the physician

69 Eve, *Jewish Context*, 106.

70 Collins, *Wisdom*, 23.

71 Collins, *Wisdom*, 23.

72 Patrick W. Skehan and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: A New Translation with Notes*, AB 39 (New York: Doubleday, 1987) published a translation of the extant Hebrew text.

(38:1–15) and the section praising the famous men of Israel's past (44:1–50:29), refer to miracles. In this latter section three miracle stories are recounted that contain emotion language.

1.5.2.1 *Sirach 45:18–22*

In an encomium on Aaron, the author makes reference to the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (see Num 16). The treatment in Sirach is brief, and the point of its inclusion is to further the idea, found throughout this section on Aaron, that his appointment and success are entirely the work of God. Thus, when Aaron was faced with a challenge to his authority, God quickly and decisively judged the agitators. In describing God's perspective on the rebellion, the text states, "The Lord saw it and was not pleased, and in the wrath of his anger (θυμῶ ὀργῆς) they were destroyed" (Sir 45:19). This description intensifies the portrayal of God's anger in the biblical account, which is relegated to the inference of Moses and Aaron: "Shall one man sin and you become angry (קצף) with the whole congregation?" (Num 16:22).

1.5.2.2 *Sirach 45:23–24*

Here, the author offers brief praise for Phinehas, the son of Eleazar and grandson of Aaron. The treatment of Phinehas focuses on a single event: his role in stopping the plague God had sent against Israel after their apostasy at Shittim with Baal of Peor. The narrative of Numbers 25:1–18 is summarized in a mere two sentences in Sirach, but among the details that are retained is the depiction of Phinehas's emotional reaction. Sirach states that Phinehas was "zealous (ζηλῶν) in the fear of the Lord," which led to his action in making atonement for the congregation. The attribution of zeal to Phinehas is a reflection of God's assessment of Phinehas's action in Num 25:11–13, where the Hebrew root זנל ("zeal") appears twice (LXX has ζηλῶν). In Sirach, as in the account from Numbers, Phinehas's zeal precipitates the miracle of the plague's end and brings praise and reward from God.

1.5.2.3 *Sirach 48:17–22*

This section of Sirach extols Hezekiah. The portion of Hezekiah's story that receives the most treatment (still only a few sentences) is the deliverance of Judah from the army of Sennacherib (see the more detailed accounts in 2 Kgs 18:13–19:37, 2 Chr 32:1–23, and Isa 36:1–37:38). Sirach relays the basic outline of the story: Sennacherib's threat against Jerusalem, the fearful response of the people of Judah, their appeal to God for aid, and God's deliverance in striking down Sennacherib's army through an angelic force.

In the people's response to the threats of Sennacherib, Sirach depicts them as being in "anguish" (ὠδίνω), like women in labor (48:19). In their distress, they call out to God, who is known as "merciful" (ἐλεήμονα). Amid their own experience of emotion, they appeal to God's character as one who feels pity or concern for his people when they are hurting. God hears their appeal and intervenes, bringing destruction upon the invading army.

In the use of ὠδίνω ("anguish") Sirach makes explicit what the parallel Scripture texts only imply—anguish can be assumed in the accounts of 2 Kings and Isaiah through Hezekiah's (and his officials') putting on of sackcloth (2 Kgs 19:1–2; Isa 37:1–2). Meanwhile, the prayers of Hezekiah recorded in 2 Kings and Isaiah make no explicit reference to God's mercy or pity. Rather, the appeal is directed toward God's making known to the other nations that he alone is God (see 2 Kgs 19:19; Isa 37:20). Sirach is thus offering commentary on the presumed response of God that is demonstrated in the story's outcome.

These two works of wisdom literature follow a similar pattern to the other Jewish works described in this chapter: the writers show a tendency to fill in the portrait of the miracle worker's character by supplying a glimpse of the emotions that fostered the miraculous action. As we have seen, use of such language in Wisdom functions within the writer's overarching purpose to exonerate and exalt Israel while castigating Israel's enemies. Meanwhile, in Sirach, the added emotion language seems to function in a way that either extols God's chosen servants or highlights the character of God himself, who responds to the needs of his people and acts on their behalf against their enemies. God's response may be one of anger if his enemies are in focus, and one of pity if his own people are in view.

1.6 *Second Temple Period Narratives*

1.6.1 Tobit

The book of Tobit was likely written around 200 BCE.⁷³ Its original language seems to have been Aramaic.⁷⁴ The text exists in Greek in three primary recensions, which all relay the same essential story.⁷⁵ The pious Tobit, living in exile in Nineveh, attempts to live as a devout Jew in a foreign land—expressed chiefly in his giving of alms and in his diligent burial of the dead—until he tragically contracts blindness from bird droppings landing in his eyes. Meanwhile, one

73 Carey A. Moore, *Tobit: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 40A (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 40.

74 Moore, *Tobit*, 33–39.

75 Eve, *Jewish Context*, 219.

of Tobit's relatives, Raguel, who lives in Ecbatana, has a daughter named Sarah who is being tormented by a demon that has killed all seven of her husbands upon marriage. With the help of the angel Raphael, disguised as a relative, Tobit's son Tobias journeys to Ecbatana, marries Sarah, and drives away the demon plaguing her. Tobias then returns to Nineveh, and again with the help of Raphael, heals his father's eyes.

Of the two miracle stories of the book of Tobit, only that of the expulsion of the demon contains emotion language. Raphael's instructions to Tobias regarding the expulsion of the demon include the prescription to burn a fish's liver and heart as well as an outline for a prayer to offer to God. In the prayer, Tobias was to ask the Lord for pity (or mercy; ἔλεος, Tob 6:18). Then, when Tobias and Sarah are in the bridal chamber, they pray as Raphael instructed that God would show them pity (ἐλέεω, 8:4, 7). When Raguel discovers the next morning that Tobias is still alive, he offers a response of praise to God. Twice in his praise, he extols God's pity (ἔλεος/ἐλέεω, 8:16–17), and he twice asks God to continue to show pity to Tobias and Sarah in the future (ἔλεος, 8:17). The expulsion of the demon is thus clearly and repeatedly portrayed as an act of God's pity on his faithful servants.

1.6.2 2 Maccabees

This book was likely composed in the late second or early first century BCE.⁷⁶ Its original language was Greek, and the stories it narrates occurred around 180–161 BCE.⁷⁷ It claims to be an epitome of a five-volume work by Jason of Cyrene, now lost (2 Macc 2:23). Second Maccabees places much greater emphasis on the miraculous aspects of the Maccabean war than does 1 Maccabees.⁷⁸ It also contains a great deal of emotion language. Four passages explicitly place emotion language in the context of a miracle story.

1.6.2.1 2 Macc 3:14–28

During the high priesthood of Onias III, an official of the Seleucid king Seleucus IV Philopater named Heliodorus came to the Temple to confiscate the treasury, after being alerted to it by the Jewish informant Simon (2 Macc 3:4–13). On hearing this, Onias and the people become greatly distressed and call upon

⁷⁶ See the discussion on the date in Robert Doran, *2 Maccabees: A Critical Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 14–15; see also David A. deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, and Significance*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 242.

⁷⁷ Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 18–19; deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 240–41.

⁷⁸ Eve, *Jewish Context*, 244; see also deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 239, who states that 2 Maccabees “stresses the direct and miraculous interventions of God.”

God for help (3:14–21). God responds by sending a “manifestation” (ἐπιφάνεια) of a horse and rider, who rush at Heliodorus, along with two men who flog him. On the brink of death, Heliodorus is carried out on a stretcher (3:22–28).

The account of Onias’s and the people’s distress and their appeal to God is filled with emotion language.⁷⁹ The noun ἀγωνία (“distress” or “anguish”) occurs twice (2 Macc 3:14, 16), and the related verb ἀγωνιάω occurs once (3:21). Onias experiences “terror” (δέος), and the condition of the populace is “pitiable” (ἐλεέω). It is out of this heightened emotional state that the priest and the people invoke God. There is no explicit mention of God’s emotional response, but he acts with immediacy on the people’s request, implying a response of care for his people.

1.6.2.2 2 Macc 8:1–29

This section falls within 2 Maccabees’s treatment of the Maccabean revolt. The author recounts the gathering of an army under Judas and gives a general assessment of their early success. This results in Ptolemy’s appointment of Nicanor to defeat the rebellion. Judas then prepares the army to face Nicanor, reminding them of past Israelite victories in situations where they were greatly outnumbered. Judas and the army then soundly defeat Nicanor’s army.

Throughout the account, the author makes clear that the success of Judas and his army is solely due to the intervention of God. The gathered army prays for God to “have pity” (οἰκτεῖρω) on the temple and to “have mercy” (ἐλεέω) on Jerusalem (8:2–3).⁸⁰ The ensuing early success of Judas’s army is then attributed to God’s turning from anger (ὀργή) to pity (ἔλεος, 8:5), an echo of the seventh brother’s prayer at his martyrdom in the preceding narrative (7:33–38). In the battle with Nicanor, God is described as the army’s ally (8:24), and the Israelite victory is attributed to God’s mercy (ἔλεος, 8:27). Finally, the victorious army prays for the “merciful” (ἐλεήμονα) Lord to be fully reconciled to his people, another echo of the seventh brother’s speech (7:33). God’s mercy or pity—exhibited in his divine aid in battle—thus takes center stage in this account.

79 Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 84, states, “This section [3:14–23] clearly demonstrates the author’s intention to involve the audience in the action, as he highlights the tragic emotions.”

80 On the pairing of οἰκτεῖρω and ἐλεέω here, Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 171, draws attention to the similar prayer at Sirach 36:17–18: “Have mercy [ἐλέησον], O Lord, on the people called by your name ... Have pity [οἰκτίρησον] on the city of your sanctuary, Jerusalem, the place of your dwelling.”

1.6.2.3 2 Macc 11:6–12

The author records another battle in which divine aid is given to bring victory to the Maccabean army. Here, it is Lysias, an official of Antiochus IV, who leads an army against Judea. When Judas and his men learn that Lysias is besieging Beth-zur near Jerusalem, they appeal to God for help. Then they set out to engage Lysias's army, only to witness the appearance of a heavenly horseman at the front of the army. This emboldens Judas's army, who in turn routs the enemy.

As in the story of Judas's defeat of Nicanor's army (2 Macc 8:1–29), the author underscores God's intervention in bringing about military success. They had prayed to God “with laments and tears” (ὁδυρμῶν καὶ δακρύων, 11:6). When they saw the horseman appear at the front of the line, they acknowledged that God had shown pity (ἐλεήμονα, 11:9; ἐλέησαντος, 11:10) in response to their appeal. The parallel story in 1 Macc 4:26–35 is void of the expression of distress, the supernatural assistance, and the explicit attribution of success to God's pity.

1.6.2.4 2 Macc 13:9–17

Once again, the Seleucid army moved to attack Judea, this time at the behest of Antiochus V Eupator. In the now familiar pattern of battles in 2 Maccabees, Judas and the people call out to God to come to their aid. Their petition is to the “merciful” (ἐλεήμονα) Lord, and their posture before him includes “weeping” (κλαυθμοῦ). In this situation, no explicit miraculous intervention is detailed, in contrast to the stories of 3:14–28 and 11:6–12 just discussed. But lest the reader think the ensuing victory at Modein was entirely Judas's or his army's doing, the narrator clarifies that what had taken place was “because the Lord's help protected [Judas]” (13:17); in other words, God indeed showed himself merciful to his people.

1.6.3 3 Maccabees

Third Maccabees was likely written in the early first century BCE, around the same time as 2 Maccabees.⁸¹ There is consensus that the original language

81 H. Anderson, “3 Maccabees,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011; 1st edition, New York: Doubleday, 1983), 510–12; deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 277–80. For a later dating (in the Roman period), see Moses Hadas, *The Third and Fourth Books of Maccabees* (New York: Harper, 1953), 3–4, 17–21; John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 124–25; see also the discussion in N. Clayton Croy, *3 Maccabees*, Septuagint Commentary Series (Leiden: Brill, 2006), xi–xiii.

of the text was Greek.⁸² The work is set in Ptolemaic Egypt during the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopater (221–204 BCE). Third Maccabees tells the story of Ptolemy's desire to enter the Jerusalem Temple, which, following the prayer of the high priest Simon, God prevents by miraculous intervention (1:1–2:23). In response, Ptolemy oppresses the Jews living in Egypt, and after they resist, he gathers a multitude of Jews to be trampled by elephants (2:24–5:10). God again miraculously intervenes, and the king renounces the mistreatment of the Jews, leading to the institution of a Jewish festival (5:11–7:23). Josephus also has an account, though much briefer, of the elephant incident (*Ag. Ap.* 2.50–53), but he sets it at a later period, during the reign of Ptolemy Physcon (146–117 BCE). Both miraculous events of 3 Maccabees occur following prayers for deliverance, and as we will see, each of the prayers contain emotion language, appealing to God's concern for his people.⁸³

1.6.3.1 3 Macc 2:79–20

With Ptolemy on the brink of profaning the Temple, Simon the high priest offers a prayer for God's intervention—that he would display his judgment as he had in the flood, the destruction of Sodom, and the exodus (3 Macc 2:1–7). At the conclusion of the prayer, Simon pleads that God would “show pity” (ἐπιφρονον τὸ ἔλεός σου) upon his people (2:19) and that his “mercies” (οἰκτιρμοί) would overtake them (2:20). God heard Simon's prayer and struck Ptolemy, “shaking him this way and that like a reed by the wind,” leaving him severely injured (2:21–23). The narrative thus assumes that God had indeed acted out of pity on his people's behalf.

1.6.3.2 3 Macc 5:1–6:41

God's miraculous deliverance from the threat of elephant trampling occurs in three scenes, which take place over three successive days. In the first scene, during the night before the scheduled destruction of the Jews, while the elephants are being prepared (drugged to become wild), the Jews with “tears” (δακρύων) implore God, whom the narrator describes as “merciful” (ἐλεήμονα, 5:7). That night, God, presumably acting out of his mercy, causes the king to oversleep, leading to the postponement of the Jews' destruction. In the second scene, the elephants are again readied for their task, and again, the Jews

82 Anderson, “3 Maccabees,” 510; deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 277; Croy, *3 Maccabees*, xi.

83 Anderson, “3 Maccabees,” 510, argues that the work can aptly be classified as a “historical romance,” in part because of the embellishment of events for dramatic effect “by the addition of colorful but irrelevant detail.” DeSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 280, in discussing this “historical romance” classification, alludes specifically to the “heightening of pathos” as a characteristic of this type of literature.

appeal to God with “tearful supplication and mournful tunes” (πολύδακρυν ἱκετεῖαν ἐν μέλεσιν γοηροῖς, 5:25) to deliver them. When Ptolemy wakes up in the morning, he has miraculously forgotten his order to harm the Jews, again a demonstration of God’s mercy on his people. In the third scene, the elephants are again prepared, and this time, Ptolemy rises in the morning ready to follow through on his orders. The Jews respond with “wailing and weeping” (οἶκτον καὶ γόους, 5:49) and again call upon God for deliverance, asking that he “show pity” (οἰκτίραι, 5:51) in their time of desperation. Then, a certain priest named Eleazar offers a moving supplication (6:1–15). Twice in his prayer, Eleazar acknowledges the “merciful” character of God (οἰκτιρμοῖς, 6:2; πολυέλεε, 6:9). He beseeches God to display that “mercy” (ἐλέους, 6:4) upon his people, who are all in “tears” (δακρύων, 6:14), and to “pity” (ἐλέησον, 6:12) them in their current situation of distress. God responds by sending two angels—unseen by the Jews—who strike terror upon the king and his officials and by turning the elephants against Ptolemy’s forces. At this point, the king’s anger (ὀργή) turns to pity and tears (οἶκτον καὶ δάκρυα, 6:22), and he orders the Jews released. God thus displays pity and mercy upon his people in alignment with his reputation and in response to the appeal of the priest Eleazar. In fact, the author later sums up what had taken place as the revelation of God’s pity or mercy (ἔλεος) upon his people (6:39).

1.6.4 4 Maccabees

The book known as 4 Maccabees presents a philosophical discourse on the supremacy of reason over the passions and emotions. It was likely written in the first century CE.⁸⁴ The author was a Jew who was quite attuned to Greek philosophy and rhetoric,⁸⁵ and its original language was undoubtedly Greek.⁸⁶ Given its purpose—“to discuss whether devout reason is absolute master of the passions (πάθη)” (1:1)—emotion language features prominently throughout the text. The πάθη the author has in mind extend beyond what we might call “emotions,” as he includes gluttony, sexual desire, and avarice, but the πάθη are not simply to be equated with vices either. The list of πάθη in 1:20–28 includes joy (χαρά), fear (φόβος), sorrow (λύπη), and anger (θύμος).⁸⁷ For 4 Maccabees,

84 H. Anderson, “4 Maccabees,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011; 1st edition, New York: Doubleday, 1983), 533–34; deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 321.

85 Anderson, “4 Maccabees,” 532–33; deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 320.

86 Anderson, “4 Maccabees,” 532; deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 320–21.

87 DeSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 318, describes πάθη in 4 Maccabees as “a complex term involving emotions, passions, and all sensory experiences.”

it seems that *πάθη* could be defined as anything that inhibits reason. As such, the *πάθη* have no place in a rational person's life, especially the person whose thoughts are directed by the divine law.

The supreme example the author provides for mastery over the *πάθη* is the martyrdom of Eleazar, his seven sons, and their mother. Their victory over the *πάθη* includes their rejection of compassion. The notion that the seven sons would have compassion (*κατοικτίρωμεν*) on their mother for having to watch her sons die is absent from their minds (4 Macc 8:20). When the youngest son is set to become the next victim, Antiochus appeals for him to “show pity” (*ἐλεήσας*) to his mother. He—with the mother's encouragement—refuses to bow to the *πάθη* and readily faces his death.⁸⁸ Overall in 4 Maccabees, compassion and pity are viewed as a demonstration of weakness. It is the enemies of God's people who are portrayed as exhibiting compassion. The king's officers have “pity” (*ἐλεῶντες*, 6:12) on Eleazar's old age and offer him “mercy” (*οἰκτιρμόν*, 6:24). Antiochus “feels compassion” (*οἰκτίρομαι*) for the seven brothers because of their youth and beauty, and then was “moved with pity” (*κατοικτίρας*) toward the youngest son (12:2). Meanwhile, the mother of the seven martyred sons, set up by the author as the one most expected to express emotion at what took place (not just because of her motherly love, but also simply because she was a woman; see 14:11; 16:1), does not even weep or shed tears (16:19–20).

While the reader of 4 Maccabees might think that the ability of the martyrs to withstand their torture—and speak fluently while doing so—belongs within the realm of miracle, the author does not make such a point. The one miracle story in which emotion language appears precedes the account of the martyrs.

1.6.4.1 4 Macc 4:7–14

This story, a version of which is told in 2 Maccabees 3:14–28 (see the prior discussion of this text), recounts an attack made upon the Jerusalem Temple by a Seleucid official, Apollonius,⁸⁹ with the goal of plundering the treasury. The Jewish people appeal to God to protect his sanctuary, after which Apollonius is confronted by angels appearing from heaven, who leave him in a motionless

88 Interestingly, God seems to be exempt from the mandate to overcome the *πάθη*, at least with respect to anger. God was “angered” (*ἀγανακτήσασα*) at the Hellenization of the Seleucid-appointed high priest, Jason, which led to his sending Antiochus against his people (4:21). Later, the second son of Eleazar alludes to Antiochus's future suffering at the hands of God's “wrath” (*ὀργῆς*).

89 Whereas in 4 Maccabees the perpetrator is Apollonius, the governor of Syria, in 2 Maccabees 3 it is Heliodorus, sent by King Seleucus.

terror.⁹⁰ Apollonius then asks the Jews “with tears” (δακρύων) to pray for him that he might be spared from the heavenly host. The high priest Onias is “moved” (ὑπαχθείς) by Apollonius’s prayer, and he prays for him. The outcome is described ambiguously as a “miraculous deliverance,” and Apollonius departs Jerusalem.⁹¹ Whereas in the version in 2 Maccabees, in which emotion language appears in the anguished prayers of the people at the prospect of the Temple’s desecration, here it occurs in the appeal of the pagan Apollonius, following God’s miraculous intervention on behalf of his people. The author of 4 Maccabees likely did not want to convey any sense of emotion among the Jewish people during this event, given the general attitude about keeping the *παθή* under control. Nonetheless, God seems to extend pity to this Seleucid official in response to Onias’s plea.

In these diverse narrative texts, emotions play an even more significant role in miracle stories than they do in the majority of the other Jewish texts we have reviewed here. Repeatedly in these narratives, God’s people find themselves in a precarious situation, and repeatedly, God displays pity or mercy in response to their appeals and brings deliverance.

1.7 *Other Texts*

Two additional Jewish texts that have possible origins in the first century CE contain emotion language in the context of a miracle story: the *Life of Adam and Eve* and the *Testament of Abraham*.⁹² The placement of these two texts

90 In 2 Maccabees 3, Heliodorus is physically injured by the intervening angels, but here no physical harm is explicitly mentioned.

91 The account in 2 Maccabees suggests that Heliodorus was cured of a mortal affliction (2 Macc 3:33).

92 Aside from these two texts, two additional texts from Eve’s survey contain emotion language in the context of a miracle story. In the *Hellenistic Synagogal Prayers* 4.23–24, a variety of nature and healing miracles (with clear Hebrew Bible referents) are listed as examples of God’s kindness and “compassions” (οἰκτιρμοίς). However, the text was likely composed between 150 CE and 300 CE, and Christian content emerges throughout. See the discussion of dating in D. A. Fiensy, “Hellenistic Synagogal Prayers,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011; 1st edition, New York: Doubleday, 1983), 673. In 4 Ezra 1:12–23, a number of the exodus-wilderness miracles are recounted. The summary of miracles is designed to show all that God had done for his people and how they nonetheless rejected him throughout that time. In this account, when the people were complaining of hunger and thirst in the wilderness, God “pitied” (Latin, *dolui*) them and gave them food and water (1:17–20). However, while the original Jewish text of 4 Ezra may be dated to the end of the first century CE, this passage occurs in the Christian framework (chapters 1–2 and 15–16), which was likely not added until the mid- to late-third century CE (see the discussion in B. M. Metzger, “The Fourth Book of Ezra,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1,

at the end of this survey is due to the fact that they were likely to have been composed after the Gospel of Mark. Nonetheless, their potential proximity to Mark and their possible contribution to first-century ideas on the topic gives merit to their examination.

1.7.1 *Life of Adam and Eve (Apocalypse of Moses)*

The text of this work survives in a Greek version (known as the *Apocalypse of Moses*)⁹³ and a Latin version (*Vita Adae et Evae*), which contain significant differences. It has been posited that there was a Hebrew original behind these versions, though consensus is lacking.⁹⁴ The arguments for the text's date are likewise inconclusive. For example, M. D. Johnson intimates that the text originated around the end of the first century CE.⁹⁵ Marinus de Jonge and Johannes Tromp think it unlikely that the text predates 100 CE, given what they see as Christian origin. They suggest that any date between 100 and 600 CE is possible.⁹⁶

The text narrates events that purportedly occurred following the banishment of Adam and Eve from Paradise, focusing especially on episodes around their deaths. The passage of interest for our purposes occurs in the context of God's punishing Adam's disobedience.

1.7.1.1 *Apoc. Mos. 8–13 (Life 34–42)*

As a result of Adam's eating from the forbidden tree, God strikes Adam with seventy plagues, apparently of a physical nature (Apoc. Mos. 8.2). This leads to Adam's distress (λύπη, 9.1) and Eve's weeping (ἐκλαυσε, 9.2). Adam then instructs Eve to go with their son Seth and approach Paradise so as to perform acts of mourning there and beseech God to show compassion (σπλαγχνισθῇ, 9.3).⁹⁷ They appeal to God to allow them to carry back to Adam the oil of mercy

ed. James H. Charlesworth [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011; 1st edition, New York: Doubleday, 1983], 517–20).

93 The title *Apocalypse of Moses* comes from the preface to the Greek version. M. D. Johnson, "Life of Adam and Eve," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011; 1st edition, New York: Doubleday, 1983), 259, concludes that the preface is "certainly a later addition" and notes that the text has nothing to do with Moses and is not technically an apocalypse.

94 Johnson, "Life," 251. For an argument that the original text was Greek, see M. E. Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve*, SBL Early Judaism and Its Literature 3 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 42–56.

95 Johnson, "Life," 252.

96 Marinus de Jonge and Johannes Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve and Related Literature* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 75–77.

97 The Latin parallel (*Vita* 36.2) has *miserebitur* here.

(ἐλέου, 13.1),⁹⁸ which presumably has the power to heal. God rejects their request, indicating that it is futile to ask. Only in the last days, when all people are raised, will Adam be restored (13.2–6). When the death of Adam is later recounted (Apoc. Mos. 31–37), it is the pardoning of Adam and his ability even to enter Paradise in the end times where God is shown to have mercy (ἡλέησε, 37.2). While this passage (Apoc. Mos. 8–13) does not provide a demonstration of the miracle worker's emotion, the appeal for healing from Eve and Seth reflects an expectation that God does act out of compassion if he so chooses.

1.7.2 *Testament of Abraham*

The *Testament of Abraham* exists in two forms: a longer recension (rec. A) and a shorter recension (rec. B). Both are extant in Greek, and while a Hebrew original has been posited, especially for recension B, a compelling case has been made by E. P. Sanders for a Greek original.⁹⁹ In his assessment of the date for the *Testament of Abraham*, Sanders surveys views that attribute the date anywhere from 200 BCE to the end of the second century CE, before presenting his own argument for the late first or early second century CE.¹⁰⁰

The *Testament of Abraham* presents stories of the period leading up to Abraham's death. Abraham is visited by the archangel Michael, who announces Abraham's impending death. Attempting to ward off his death, Abraham requests that he be given a tour of the world. The tour is then recounted, and after Abraham again attempts to rebuff his death, God sends another angelic being, Death, who deceives Abraham, leading to his demise. Two passages in the *Testament of Abraham* are pertinent to the present discussion.

1.7.2.1 *Test. Abr. 3.7–12 (Rec. A); 3.7–10 (Rec. B)*

When Michael arrives at Abraham's house, Abraham summons Isaac to fetch water in order to wash their guest's feet. According to recension A, while washing Michael's feet, Abraham's "inward parts were moved," (ἐκινήθησαν δὲ τὰ σπλάγχνα), and suddenly he begins to weep (ἐδάκρυσεν). This leads to Isaac's crying (κλαίοντα). Finally, Michael himself weeps with them (κλαίοντας

98 The Latin parallel to Apoc. Mos. 13 (*Vita* 40) has Eve and Seth again begging God to pity (*misereretur*) Adam.

99 E. P. Sanders, "Testament of Abraham," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011; 1st edition, New York: Doubleday, 1983), 873–74.

100 Sanders, "Testament of Abraham," 874–75. See also the discussion of dating in Dale C. Allison, *Testament of Abraham* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), 34–40, who presents a case that it predates 115 CE, though he does not offer a more specific suggestion other than to say that the *terminus a quo* is the beginning of the second century BCE.

συνεδάκρυσεν). But as the angel's tears fall into the vessel of water, the tears turn into precious stones. Recension B relays the story similarly but also adds some context to the weeping. Here, Abraham makes a statement that this would be the last time he washes someone's feet. This precipitates Isaac's crying, which in turn, causes Abraham's tears and subsequently the angel's as well. Similar language is used to express the emotion of the situation, except that recension B lacks the expression ἐκινήθησαν δὲ τὰ σπλάγχνα. In both versions, the emotional response itself turns into a nature miracle, with tears being transformed into precious stones.

1.7.2.2 *Test. Abr. 10.4–15 (Rec. A); 12.1–14 (Rec. B)*

During Abraham's tour of the world, he sees various groups of people committing sin. On seeing each atrocity, Abraham asks Michael to send a lethal, supernatural punishment on the perpetrators. After this happens three times, God commands Michael to stop the tour before Abraham sees the whole world and brings further destruction. In Recension A, God's assessment is that Abraham has "no pity" (οὐκ ἔλεξ', 10.13) on sinners, whereas God is patient and allows sinners ample time to repent. Recension B presents the same contrast between Abraham's treatment of sinners and God's but employs different wording in stating that Abraham "has no compassion" (οὐ σπλαγχνίζεται) for sinners, while God has compassion (σπλαγχνίζομαι) upon sinners (12.12–13). So interestingly, unlike in the first miracle story relayed above (the story of the tears turning into precious stones), here it is Recension B that incorporates σπλαγχν-terminology. As far as the miracles themselves in this second narrative, they are depicted as stemming from a lack of compassion on Abraham's part.

These two texts (or rather, groups of texts) each present extrabiblical material in which the denial of compassion comes to the forefront. We also see here the only instances of σπλαγχν-terminology in all the literature surveyed in this chapter, a fact made all the more interesting in light of the relatively late provenance of these two texts.

1.8 *A Note on Honi the Circle Drawer and Hanina ben Dosa*

Finally, due to the frequent attention given to the Jewish figures Honi the Circle Drawer and Hanina ben Dosa in discussions of Jesus's miracles,¹⁰¹ it seems necessary to explain why these two figures have not been included in the present discussion. While Honi lived during the first century BCE and Hanina may have been a contemporary of Jesus, there is only one extant account of these two

101 Scholarly awareness of these two figures can largely be traced to the work of Geza Vermes. See Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, especially pp. 69–80.

figures that predates the third century CE—that is, if we consider the Onias mentioned by Josephus to be the same person known elsewhere as Honi. That account in Josephus (*Ant.* 14.22–24), which does contain a miracle story, does not include any emotion language. Of the later miracle stories relayed of these figures, only one account from the Mishnah (*Taanit* 3:8), which is dated to around 200 CE, contains emotion language. The rest of the instances in which a portrayal of emotions is included in a miracle story surrounding one of these figures are found in the Babylonian Talmud, dating to the fifth or sixth century CE.¹⁰² So for the purposes of this study, which aims to analyze material that could serve as a backdrop for how Mark discusses Jesus's emotions in miracle stories, these accounts play no role.¹⁰³

2 Summary of Findings from Second Temple Jewish Literature

We can make several observations at this point regarding the use of emotion language in miracle accounts from Jewish literature. First, the inclusion of an emotion in the portrayal of a miracle worker is fairly common in Jewish literature from this time period. A large number of texts, displaying diverse genres and arising in various cultural milieus, contain emotion language in miracle stories.

Second, when compared to the Hebrew Scriptures, this later Jewish literature displays an increased emphasis on depicting the emotions of miracle workers. Even if we include terms that in biblical Hebrew constitute more than strictly an emotion, the Hebrew Scriptures contain few such terms, and in general, seem seldom concerned with offering a characterization of the miracle worker in the individual miracle stories themselves. This increase in emotion language is even more pronounced in extrabiblical material and in narratives that arose within the late Hellenistic and early imperial periods.

Third, as was the case in the Greco-Roman miracle stories we examined in chapter 2, the majority of stories in Jewish texts in which a miracle worker's emotions are evoked arise in the treatment of a divine miracle worker. In almost every case from the Jewish writings surveyed here, the miracle worker showing emotion is God. The only exceptions come in Josephus's treatment of

102 See Eve, *Jewish Context*, 272.

103 It is also worth noting that many scholars have now recognized the disproportionate focus on comparing these two figures with Jesus, given the dating of the sources relaying the traditions about Honi and Hanina. See, e.g., Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:581–88; Avery-Peck, "Galilean Charismatic," 149–65; Eve, *Jewish Context*, 272–73.

Elisha in the story of the increased oil in *Antiquities*, Philo's allusion in *On the Life of Moses* to Moses's pity at the ending of the plague of darkness in Egypt, Philo's version of the Korah incident in *On the Life of Moses*, in which Moses's anger directly precipitates the punitive miracle, and Sirach's discussion of Phinehas, whose zeal brings about the end of a plague.¹⁰⁴

Fourth, most of the texts studied here set up a dichotomy between the righteous and faithful Jews (or the people of God) on the one hand and the enemies of God on the other. A repeated emphasis in these texts is the miraculous deliverance of God's people from their enemies. The language of pity or mercy serves this theme well, as God can be expected to act with pity toward his afflicted faithful while also acting out of anger toward the enemies of his people.

Finally, whereas in the Greco-Roman miracle stories discussed in chapter 2 the emotion language employed is a fairly even balance between notions of anger and notions of pity, in the Jewish miracle accounts surveyed the emphasis falls more heavily on language of pity than on anger. And several of the occurrences of anger fall within treatments of the Korah incident, which is one of the few narratives in the Hebrew Scriptures in which the emotional response of the miracle worker seems to play a role in the miracle. This emphasis on notions of pity, compassion, and mercy makes sense in light of the point just made that these texts often feature God's miraculous deliverance of his people. God is characterized by these texts as one who will respond with pity toward the afflicted faithful, which will in turn result in his specific actions in coming to their aid.

3 Conclusion: Emotions in Greco-Roman and Jewish Miracle Stories

In the miracle accounts from the Greco-Roman world discussed in chapter 2, we saw many references to emotions in the epics of Homer, but relatively few references in the later material contemporaneous to the Second Temple period

¹⁰⁴ In two of these four incidents, God is presumably the one performing the miracle. This is explicitly the case in Philo's account of the plague of darkness, and likewise seems to be the case in Sirach's account of Phinehas and the plague. However, the emotions of the human figures, who, using Kahl's terminology, may in such cases be classified merely as mediators of God's numinous power, are presented as playing an important role in the miracle. This list of miracles which features the emotions of actors who are not God might also include the two stories from the *Testament of Abraham* summarized earlier. But in both cases, including an account in which Abraham's emotions are in view, the miracle worker is an angelic figure, so these could be placed in a category of their own.

in Judaism. The reverse is true with respect to the Jewish literature surveyed in the present chapter. While the Hebrew Scriptures are rather muted with regard to miracle workers' emotions, in other Second Temple Jewish literature there is a relative groundswell of allusions to miracle workers' emotions. This is especially true of literature arising in the late Hellenistic and early Roman periods.

Part of this increase of emotion language in miracle accounts in Jewish literature is undoubtedly the result of the use of the Greek language, which has a linguistic space for terms that may be strictly defined as emotions in a way that the Hebrew language does not. However, another factor that may contribute to why an increase in emotion language occurs more in Hellenistic Jewish miracle accounts but not as much in Greco-Roman miracle accounts from the time period is the position of Jews within society—namely a subjugated position.¹⁰⁵ By demonstrating that pity or compassion is a crucial Jewish concept, having its root in the stories of their ancestors, Jews could present themselves honorably to the larger society, in which their status was suspect. In other words, Jews could identify themselves as those who have (a) the ability to bestow pity on others and (b) the character and desire to do so.¹⁰⁶ By casting their God in terms that display his pity toward those who are suffering, Jewish writers provide a divine model for Jews to emulate.¹⁰⁷

As we conclude this examination of the use of emotions in the treatment of miracle workers from Greco-Roman literature (chapter 2) and Jewish literature (chapter 3), we may now ask, What ideas might a first-century writer like Mark or an audience like that of Mark's Gospel have with respect to miracle workers and the depiction of their emotions?

First, while many of these stories were likely unknown to Mark and his audience, it is highly likely that most people living in the first century Greco-Roman world had at least some familiarity with certain stories, particularly those from the Homeric epics or, in the case of the Jewish people, from the Hebrew or Greek Scriptures. Presumably then, most of Mark's audience would have had some basis for a concept regarding the connection of emotion language and miraculous intervention. As such, the characterization of a miracle worker's emotions may not have been a novel concept for many.

105 See Mirguet, *Early History of Compassion*, especially chapter 4, "Bonds in Flux"; chapter 5, "In Dialogue with the Empire"; and the Conclusion, "A Discourse of the Other." Mirguet makes a compelling case that Hellenistic Jewish authors were employing the language of pity or compassion for the purpose of repositioning their status within society.

106 Mirguet, *Early History of Compassion*, 229, states, "Pity ... has been *made* Jewish, and then used to *make* Jewish; the emotion is characteristic of a hybrid community, conversant in two literary and cultural heritages, without strict dissociation" (emphasis original).

107 Mirguet, *Early History of Compassion*, 229.

Second, many first-century inhabitants of the Greco-Roman world likely had an understanding that God (or the gods) would be apt to have pity or show mercy on those whom the god favors, or, in the case of Jewish thought, on the community that God favors. Such ideas would have found support in the miracle stories discussed in these two chapters.

Third, in the first-century Greco-Roman world, people would have been keenly aware that extending pity or mercy was the prerogative of one who was on the right side of the power differential. In other words, someone who bestows pity on a suffering other is (a) removed from the situation itself (i.e., is not suffering) and (b) in a position to offer assistance.¹⁰⁸ This would certainly be the case when the miracle worker is either considered divine or is clearly in a position of power, such as an emperor. In situations of affliction in which the cure, resolution, or deliverance is viewed as only possible through extraordinary intervention, it is chiefly God (or the gods) who are in the position to offer pity or mercy. Petitioners, whether they were aiming their appeal to Asclepius, Isis, or the God of Israel, understood that their deliverance from affliction in such cases was dependent on the god responding to them with pity. The emotion language employed most frequently in the miracle stories examined here—ἐλεέω/ἔλεος and cognates—inherently suggests this power differential.

Finally, based on the miracle stories examined here, the characterization of human miracle workers in terms of their emotional response to those afflicted simply does not seem to be of much concern to ancient writers prior to the writing of the Gospels. There are very few instances in the extant sources in which the emotion of a human attributed with working a miracle is described in the text. For most first-century CE inhabitants of the Greco-Roman world, there may not have been much if any of a register for a human miracle worker having an encounter with a suppliant and expressing emotion prior to performing the miracle. We will now turn in the next chapter to examine the use and development of σπλάγγιον and cognates as a different mode of expressing one's emotional response to suffering others.

108 See Mirguet, *Early History of Compassion*, 24–31, 109; see also David Konstan, *Pity Transformed* (London: Duckworth, 2001), 50.

Σπλάγχχνον in Ancient Literature and the Emergence of Σπλαγχνίζομαι

In the miracle stories examined in chapters 2 and 3, the term ἔλεος and its cognates appear quite frequently. Other terms, including ὁργή and οἶκτος, appear less frequently but still often. But in only two of the examined texts does a term with the root σπλάγχχν- appear (the *Apocalypse of Moses* and the *Testament of Abraham*), and both these texts likely date to the late first century CE or later.¹

This raises the question: How does a word that is not used to describe a miracle worker prior to the first century CE come to be used repeatedly in the characterization of the miracle worker Jesus? A satisfactory answer to this question can only be offered after a detailed examination of the texts pertaining to Jesus in which this word group appears. This research will be the focus of chapter 5. But first, in this chapter, we will examine the use of the σπλάγχχν- word group and its development in the centuries leading up to the writing of the Gospels in order to get a sense of the meaning and function of this term in Mark's context.

1 Σπλάγχχνον in Greco-Roman Literature

The noun σπλάγχχνον appears frequently (usually in the plural) in Greco-Roman literature prior to the first century CE. In the vast majority of instances, the word is used in a physical sense as a label for the inward parts of a human or animal. The precise identification of which inward parts (e.g., intestines, heart, liver) is typically not in view, but rather the term is used to refer generally to vital internal organs, the sort that would result in death if penetrated by a spear or sword. Hence the term appears in graphic descriptions of war. For example, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in his *Roman Antiquities*, recounts a battle between the Romans and the Albans, in which their respective champions deal major wounds to one another. But whereas the Roman dealt a non-mortal blow to his adversary's thigh, the Alban plunged his sword into the Roman's σπλάγχχνα, a blow which the reader is expected to consider mortal (3.19–20).²

¹ For more on the dating of these texts, see their treatment in chapter 3.

² For other examples of mortal wounds to the σπλάγχχνα in Dionysius's *Roman Antiquities*, see 4.82.3; 9.11.2; 11.37.5; 14.10.2.

The term σπλάγχνον also occurs frequently in medical texts, including the works of Hippocrates, where it appears several dozen times. The word appears in several extant Greek medical texts from the first century CE, including the works of the physician Pedanius Dioscorides³ and the grammarian Erotianus.⁴ The compound μεγάλοςπλάγχνος also appears a few times in the works of Hippocrates to speak of enlarged or swollen inward parts.⁵

The vitality of the σπλάγχνα carried over to their prominent role in sacrificial contexts. In describing certain sacrificial practices of the Romans, Dionysius of Halicarnassus mentions that portions of the σπλάγχνα were used as part of a first offering from sacrificial animals. He demonstrates that this practice is in line with traditional Greek sacrificial practice dating back to the time of Homer.⁶ In a fragment attributed to Juba II, a king of Mauretania, who reigned around 25 BCE to 24 CE, a reminder is given to roast the inward parts (σπλάγχνα) on the sacrificial fire for the gods.⁷

The σπλάγχνα are also described as a desirable portion of the sacrifice for participants to eat. According to Dionysius, when Heracles was giving instructions regarding sacrificial rites to those who were to preside over sacrifices, these officiants were allowed to partake of the first portions of the sacrifice (that is, the σπλάγχνα).⁸ Again, this practice is seen as early as Homer.⁹

The act of eating such parts—always in a sacrificial context—was occasionally described by the verb form σπλαγχνεύω or with the compound noun σπλαγχνοφάγος. The verb σπλαγχνεύω is first attested in the fifth century BCE play *Aves* by Aristophanes in reference to the partaking of the inward parts of

3 See Pedanius Dioscorides, *De Materia Medica*, 1.15.2; 1.21.1; 1.109.5; 2.2.1; 5.87.9. Each of these texts describe treatments for ailing σπλάγχνα. See also Pedanius Dioscorides, *Euporista*, 1.132.2.

4 See Erotianus, *Collection of Hippocratic Words*, 80.15–17. For an instance of a fatal disease affecting the σπλάγχνα, see Memnon, *Fragments*, frag. 2, line 34, in which a certain ruler named Satyrus, died after an illness spread to his σπλάγχνα.

5 Hippocrates, *de diaeta in morbis*, 14.6; 15.3, 12; *de morbis popularibus*, 3.3.17; Erotianus (*Collection of Hippocratic Words*, 95.1–2) glosses μεγάλοςπλάγχνος as a swelling of the σπλάγχνα.

6 Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 7.72.15–17; see Homer, *Iliad*, 1.462–466; 2.425–429; *Odyssey*, 3.9–11; 3.459–463. Throughout this section of book 7, Dionysius is seeking to defend Roman festival practices from accusations of barbarity, hence the appeal to ancient authority.

7 Juba II of Mauretania, *Fragments*, frag. 82, line 24.

8 Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.40.4. A fragment of Hegesander (3rd century BCE) likewise gives a divine stamp of approval for this practice, using the term σπλαγχνοτόμος, which appears nowhere else in the extant literature: τιμάσθαι ... ὁ Δεῖλος Δία εἰλαπιναστήν τε καὶ σπλαγχνοτόμον ("Zeus is honored as feaster and cutter-up of the entrails"). This fragment of Hegesander appears in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 4.75.1.

9 Homer, *Iliad*, 1.462–466; 2.425–429; *Odyssey*, 3.9–11, 40–41; 12.364–365; 20.252–261.

a sacrifice, and it is also used in this sense in Dionysius's *Roman Antiquities*.¹⁰ The term *σπλαγχνοφάγος* appears only twice in the extant literature, once in the fragments of the Greek philosopher Cleanthes (4th–3rd century BCE) and once in the Wisdom of Solomon.¹¹

Finally, the prominent position of the *σπλάγχνα* in sacrificial practices in the ancient world extended to their role in divination. The internal organs of sacrificial victims not only supplied the choice portions for many sacrificial meals; they were also thought to provide a window into understanding the future. In the aforementioned story attributed to Cleanthes, Prometheus was punished on account of his examination of his victim's inward parts (*σπλάγχνα*), the arrangement of which signaled to him an imminent advance of his enemies. Jupiter considered this practice especially cruel and punished Prometheus accordingly. In the mid-first century CE, the Greek philosopher Onasander provides attestation of the practice of examining entrails for divination purposes in a military context.¹²

The verb form *σπλαγχνεύω* was occasionally used to describe the inspection or examination of the inward parts for divination purposes. In the fragments of Posidonius (2nd–1st century BCE), cited by Strabo in the early first century CE, *σπλαγχνεύω* appears in a description of the Lusitanians inspecting the *σπλάγχνα* and divining through them.¹³ Strabo makes another reference to this practice using the term *σπλαγχνεύω* in *Geographika* 7.2.3. One other usage of the verb attested from the late fourth or early third century BCE provides a window into the discordant viewpoints on this practice. As cited by Porphyry in his work *On Abstinence from Animal Food*, Theophrastus stated:

10 For Aristophanes, see *Aves*, line 984: "If an impostor comes without invitation to annoy you during the sacrifice and to demand a share of the victim [*σπλαγχνεύω*], apply a stout stick to his ribs" (translation taken from Aristophanes, "Birds," in *The Complete Greek Drama*, vol. 2., ed. Eugene O'Neill, Jr. [New York: Random House, 1938]). For Dionysius, see *Roman Antiquities* 1.40.5; here, Dionysius relays the reason why a religious order was banned from partaking of the entrails (*σπλαγχνεύω*) of sacrifices, namely, that their ancestors were late in arriving to their first sacrificial meal.

11 In the fragment of Cleanthes (frag. 594, found in Pseudo-Plutarch, *De Fluviorum et Montium Nominibus*), the legend surrounding a certain mountain is relayed. In retaliation for killing a shepherd named Caucasus, Prometheus is chained to the mountain where he is tormented by a bird that feeds on his inward parts (*σπλαγχνοφάγος*). In the Wisdom of Solomon, the word occurs among a listing of the sins of the Canaanites. Alongside a reference to the slaughter of children is a reference to their "sacrificial feasting [*σπλαγχνοφάγος*] on human flesh and blood" (12:5, NRSV).

12 Onasander, *Strategikos*, 10.28.

13 Posidonius, *Fragments*, frag. 22, line 14; see Strabo, *Geographika* 3.3.6.

For some one may say that we shall subvert a great part of divination, viz. that which is effected through an inspection of the viscera [σπλάγχχνα], if we abstain from destroying animals. He, therefore, who makes this objection, should also destroy men: for it is said that future events are more apparent in the viscera [σπλάγχχνα] of men than in those of brutes; and many of the Barbarians exercise the art of divination through the entrails [σπλάγχχνεύω] of men. As, however, it would be an indication of great injustice, and inexhaustible avidity, to destroy those of our own species for the sake of divination, thus also it is unjust for the sake of this to slay an irrational animal. But it does not belong to the present discussion to investigate whether God, or daemons, or soul liberated from the animal [with which it had been connected], exhibit signs of future events to those who explore such signs, through the indications which the viscera afford.¹⁴

In addition to demonstrating opposition to this practice, this excerpt indicates that divination by this means was both well known and commonly practiced.

These physical connotations—references to the literal inward parts of humans or animals—dominate for the σπλάγχχ- word group in Greco-Roman literature. However, there are occasions in which σπλάγχχρον and its cognates take on a non-physical meaning. In such cases, the σπλάγχχνα are viewed as the source of certain emotions or attitudes, and in rare instances, a σπλάγχχν- term refers to the emotion or attitude itself. The noun σπλάγχχρον seldom carries such an idea in Greco-Roman literature, but compound forms of the word, though themselves rare, often carry a connotation of emotion.

There are a few examples in which σπλάγχχρον is used to describe a seat of emotion. In his *Eros the Runaway*, the second-century BCE poet Moschus offers this description of Eros: “Like a winged bird he flits from one person to another, men and women alike, and settles in their hearts [σπλάγχχνα].”¹⁵ While this description still alludes to a particular, physical area within the body, it suggests that the σπλάγχχνα were a prime habitat from which feelings of love would flourish. In *Roman Antiquities*, Dionysius of Halicarnassus occasionally described the σπλάγχχνα as the seat of certain emotions: concern for a mother’s old age (8.47.5), passionate love (11.35.4), and resentment (16.2.2).¹⁶ In these

14 Theophrastus, *De pietate*, cited in Porphyry, *De abstinence*, 2.51 (translation taken from Thomas Taylor, trans., *Select Works of Porphyry* [London, 1823], 84–85).

15 Moschus, *Eros the Runaway*, lines 16–17 (Hopkinson, LCL).

16 Interestingly, just a few lines after this reference to σπλάγχχνα as a place where resentment emerges and develops, the same word is used to describe the inward parts of an animal killed in a hunt (16.2.4). This demonstrates that both physical and metaphorical

instances, as with Moschus, the *σπλάγχνα* provide the ideal environment for these emotions to grow. Memnon of Heraclea, writing around the beginning of the first century CE, similarly described the grief of a certain Dionysius springing from his *σπλάγχνα* following the death of his brother.¹⁷ Finally, the physician Galen, writing in the late second or early third century CE, attests that Chrysippus, a third century BCE Stoic, considered certain emotions as deriving from the *σπλάγχνα*—and a lack of emotions as resulting from a lack of such organs (*ἄσπλαγχνος*).¹⁸ He cites a number of excerpts from Chrysippus that demonstrate this point. Galen finds Chrysippus difficult to follow, however, and concludes that Chrysippus confuses the various internal organs (specifically the heart, brain, and liver), diminishing the value of his argument.

Meanwhile, this “seat of emotion” connotation appears in several compounds of the *σπλαγχν*- root. The noun *εὐσπλαγχνία* appears in Euripides’s fifth-century tragic play *Rhesus*. In response to receiving an extravagant gift from Hector (the horses and chariot of Achilles), the Trojan warrior Dolon responds, “I will be receiving from the Trojans a most noble gift in return for my valor (*εὐσπλαγχνία*).”¹⁹ The related term *εὐσπλαγχνος* appears in Hippocrates’ *Prorrhethicon* 2 in reference to “healthy inward parts,” which produce favorable health conditions. As Euripides’s play shows, “healthy” or “good” *σπλάγχνα* could be viewed not only with reference to a physical condition but also as the source of an experience of bravery or courage. However, this idea does not seem to be found elsewhere in Greco-Roman literature.

The notion of courage arising from the *σπλάγχνα* is also seen in another compound term used by Euripides. In the play *Hippolytus*, a discussion arises regarding the reputation of one’s parents. The comment is made: “It enslaves a man, even if he is bold of heart (*θρασύσπλαγχνος*), when he is conscious of sins committed by his mother or father.”²⁰ The adverbial form *θραυσσπλάγχμως* appears in Aeschylus’s *Prometheus Bound*, again in reference to courage or boldness arising from the *σπλάγχνα*.²¹ Other than these two early plays, these

meanings for *σπλάγχνα* could coexist. It is not as though the metaphorical meanings simply replaced the physical meanings.

17 Memnon, *Fragments*, frag. 3, line 27.

18 See Galen, *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, First Part: Books I–V, 3rd ed., trans. Philip de Lacy (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2005), 192–201.

19 Euripides, *Rhesus*, line 192 (Kovacs, LCL).

20 Euripides, *Hippolytus*, line 424 (Kovacs, LCL).

21 “You will then come to the Cimmerian isthmus, right at the narrow gateway to the lake; with a bold heart (*θραυσσπλάγχμως*) you must leave it, and cross the Maeotic channel. Your crossing will in all future time be much spoken of among men, and the channel will be named after it—Bosporus, ‘Strait of the Cow’” (Aeschylus *Prometheus Bound*, lines 729–734 [Sommerstein, LCL]).

terms are not attested elsewhere in the extant literature, other than in quotations of Euripides.²²

Yet another compound term formed with σπλάγχν- is found in Euripides's play *Medea*. Medea's nurse anticipates her strong reaction to a misfortune and asks, "What will her proud (μεγαλόσπλαγχνος) soul, so hard to check, do when stung by this injury?"²³ Here, the enlargement of the inward parts (see the aforementioned use of this term in Hippocrates) is manifested in a posture of arrogance. As with the other σπλάγχν- compounds in Euripides, this term is not employed in a metaphorical sense elsewhere in the literature.

While healthy or good σπλάγχνα could be seen as the source of bravery or courage, a person's bad σπλάγχνα (κακόσπλαγχνος) could be viewed as the source of cowardice. In Aeschylus's play *The Seven Against Thebes*, one of the characters, Etioles, admonishes the "chorus" to avoid conveying fear, lest the people be overwhelmed with "cowardice" (κακόσπλαγχνος).²⁴ Along similar lines, Sophocles, in his play *Ajax*, describes cowardice by employing the term ἄσπλαγχνος. At this point in the play, Ajax deliberates about what would prove to his elderly father (and the Achaean army) that he was not born without bowels or heart (ἄσπλαγχνος).²⁵ These two playwrights thus link a lack of courage to deficient inward parts—in the latter case, a deficiency so strong that one would appear even to lack having this inner source of courage.²⁶

We have seen that in many of the instances in which a compound form using the σπλάγχν- root appears, the word carries a metaphorical meaning, specifically the notion that certain emotions arise from the σπλάγχνα. Yet these words are rare, appearing only in plays. Perhaps this colorful language was well-suited to the descriptive intentions of playwrights but did not obtain wider usage. Nonetheless, it may be that these metaphorical uses among compound words bore some level of influence on the emergence of the occasional metaphorical use of the noun σπλάγχνον in Greco-Roman literature in the latter few centuries before the Common Era.²⁷

22 See, e.g., Bion of Borysthenes, quoted in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, 4.51.

23 Euripides, *Medea*, lines 108–110 (Kovacs, LCL).

24 Aeschylus, *The Seven Against Thebes*, line 237.

25 Sophocles, *Ajax*, line 472.

26 A similar notion is found in the fragments of Chrysippus, cited by Galen, as mentioned earlier. For a physical use of the term ἄσπλαγχνος, referring to animals lacking internal organs, see Aristophanes, *Epitome of Aristotle's History of Animals*, 1.3.4.

27 Though later, Galen brings up Euripides's use of μεγαλόσπλαγχνος when providing his analysis of Chrysippus, linking Chrysippus's understanding of the σπλάγχνα with other "non-experts" like the poets. See Galen, *Hippocrates and Plato*, 3.4.23–27.

2 Σπλάγχχον in Hellenistic Jewish Literature

The use of σπλάγχχον— terms as a physical descriptor is certainly present in Jewish literature of the Hellenistic and early Roman periods. In Josephus's writing, the noun σπλάγχχον is used exclusively in a physical sense. In the only use of the term in *Antiquities*, Josephus refers to the ruptured intestine²⁸ of the ruler Zenodorus, whose subsequent death allows for an expansion of Herod's territory (15.359). The term is used eight times in *War*, five of which occur in a portrayal of the horrors of war.²⁹ In the remaining three uses, the term describes a physical malady.³⁰

In the writings of Philo, σπλάγχχον occurs thirteen times, with eleven uses clearly being to the physical inner parts. The proper function of the inward parts (σπλάγχχνα) is attributed solely to God (*On Drunkenness*, 106.12).³¹ In a discussion of how creation is ordered according to the number seven, Philo argues that the inside of the body contains seven essential organs (σπλάγχχνα), including στόμαχος (stomach), καρδιά (heart), πνεύμων (lung), σπλήν (spleen), ἥπαρ (liver), νεφροὶ δύο (two kidneys).³² Here σπλάγχχνα is the general classification under which each of these specific organs falls.³³ Perhaps due to their vitality, the σπλάγχχνα also function for Philo as a metonymy for the whole

28 This is a rare singular use of the noun (σπλάγχχου), hence the rendering “intestine” above, following the translation of Ralph Marcus, trans., *Josephus: Jewish Antiquities Books XIV–XV*. LCL 489 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 429.

29 See *War* 1.635; 2.612; 4.263; 5.560; 6.204. The first four of these references have to do with inflicting wounds upon the σπλάγχχνα. The last reference is to a certain Jewish woman named Mary, whose hunger during a siege penetrated her σπλάγχχνα; her response, designed to engender horror among the enemy, was to kill and eat her own son.

30 See *War* 1.81, 84; 5.385. In Book 1, Josephus describes a disease that had inflicted Aristobulus. Upon reflecting on a murder he had committed, Aristobulus's condition worsens, to the point that his grief tears his entrails (σπλάγχχνα), precipitating his vomiting blood. While the idea is present here that an emotional response affects the σπλάγχχνα, it does so literally (physically). The reference in Book 5 is also to a loss of fluids from the σπλάγχχνα, part of Josephus's description of the consequences experienced by the Philistines for taking the Ark from the Israelites.

31 See also Philo, *Abraham* 241.4, which describes the σπλάγχχνα as functioning to deal with what enters the body through two of the senses, namely touch and taste; and *On the Embassy to Gaius* 126.1, which refers to how the σπλάγχχνα can malfunction in extremely hot weather (due to overheating).

32 Philo, *On the Creation of the World* 118.5; *Allegorical Interpretation* 1.12.2.

33 Philo's inclusion of specific organs like καρδιά and σπλήν under the more general category σπλάγχχνα potentially calls into question the frequent translation of σπλάγχχνα as a specific organ like “heart,” “intestine,” “womb,” or the like. Sometimes a specific organ is clearly in view (e.g., “womb” in the *Exagōgē* of Ezekiel the Tragedian, line 38); however, a more general notion of “internal organs” may often be in view.

body.³⁴ In his *On the Special Laws*, Philo expounds on the Jewish sacrificial system and provides a rationale for why the fat, lobe of the liver, and kidneys play a prominent role. The fat does so because it protects the σπλάγχνα,³⁵ while the lobe of the liver does so because the liver is “the master of the σπλάγχνα.”³⁶ Philo makes reference once to the decomposing σπλάγχνα of a corpse (*On the Special Laws* 1.62.6) and once to the dire situation of a famine, in which mothers may even stoop to eat the σπλάγχνα of their daughters (*On Rewards and Punishments* 134.5).

Of the other two uses of σπλάγχνον in Philo, one reflects ambiguity as to whether there might be a metaphorical connotation. In his *On Rewards and Punishments*, Philo describes the terrible conditions that accompany the type of famine that results from the judgment of God. The hunger pains will extend to the σπλάγχνα and cause them to be filled with distress (151.2). It is unclear whether the distress is increased physical pain, or if the σπλάγχνα are to be viewed as releasing emotional distress. Even if it is the latter, the emotional distress is understood as coming from the (physical) pain experienced in the body.

The only clear metaphorical use of the term in Philo comes in *On the Posterity of Cain and His Exile*. Philo builds upon the mention of Tubal-Cain, the brass- and ironworker (Gen 4:22), to discuss those who desire the visible things of the world—and often go to war over them (hence the connection to this “father of weapons”)—in contrast to those who think about what is nobler. He comments, “While the bodily eyes see only the outward surface, the eye of the mind penetrates within, and going deep gets a clear view of all that is hidden up in the very heart [σπλάγχνα].”³⁷ Here, the σπλάγχνα are viewed as a repository, presumably of the deeper, inner thoughts and feelings of a person, though being distinct from the mind.

Thus, with only one clear exception (Philo, *Posterity* 119.1), both Josephus and Philo follow the prevailing approach of the Greco-Roman world in using the term σπλάγχνον in a physical sense, to refer to actual internal organs serving a bodily function. But when we turn to other Jewish literature of the Hellenistic and early Roman periods, a different picture emerges.

In the LXX, σπλάγχνον and related words occasionally have a purely physical connotation, especially in the Maccabean literature. The descriptions of the

34 Philo, *On the Embassy to Gaius* 368.4; see also *On Joseph* 26.1.

35 Philo, *On the Special Laws* 1.216.3.

36 Philo, *On the Special Laws* 1.216.10.

37 Philo, *Posterity* 119.1. Cf. Mark 7:1–23, in which Jesus contrasts external foods entering the body with the thoughts and desires that stem from the heart (καρδία).

tortures inflicted by Antiochus sometimes feature the *σπλάγχνα*. In 4 Maccabees, Eleazar's impassioned speech to Antiochus in response to the injunction to eat unlawful food includes the claim that he would not break the law even if Antiochus burns his entrails (*σπλάγχνα*, 4 Macc 5:28–30). This burning of the entrails later becomes part of the torture and death of the sixth of seven brothers who were killed by Antiochus (11:19). The third brother, in being torn apart by a torture device, saw blood flow out from his entrails (*σπλάγχνα*; 4 Macc 10:8). Second Maccabees similarly refers to Antiochus's torturing the *σπλάγχνα* of others, which serves as a fitting rationale for the pains in the *σπλάγχνα* inflicted upon Antiochus himself as part of God's judgment (2 Macc 9:5–6).

Second Maccabees employs the term *σπλαγχνισμός* three times in reference to pagan sacrifices, which Jews were being compelled to eat.³⁸ The first instance is a general reference to the sacrificial feasting being forced upon the Jews at a celebration of the king's birthday (2 Macc 6:7). The other two instances serve as bookends for the stories of martyrdom recounted in 6:18–7:42, with the eating of these sacrifices being viewed as the precipitating factor in the death of Eleazar, along with the deaths of seven brothers and their mother (6:21; 7:42).³⁹ The notion of sacrificial feasting is similarly conveyed by the term *σπλαγχνοφάγος*, which appears in Wisdom of Solomon 12:5 to describe one of the many sins of the Canaanites, namely the feasting on human sacrifices.

The word *σπλάγχνα* appears once in Baruch, within a prayer appealing for the deliverance of the exiles from Babylon (Bar 2:17). In this prayer, the case is being made to preserve the remnant so that they can continue to declare God's glory. Those who have died, “whose spirit has been taken from their inward parts” (ὧν ἐλήμφθη τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτῶν ἀπὸ τῶν σπλάγχνων αὐτῶν) no longer have the opportunity to do so.⁴⁰ Here, the term functions metonymically, carrying the meaning “bodies.”

Finally, in the *Exagōgē* of Ezekiel the Tragedian, *σπλάγχνον* appears with a physical sense. Moses, depicted as the speaker, recalls his upbringing in the Egyptian palace, describing the provision and instruction he received from the Egyptian princess. He states that these privileges were given “as though [he came] from her own womb/belly” (ὥς ἀπὸ σπλάγχνων ἐὼν, line 38).

As these examples have shown, many Hellenistic Jewish authors were aware of the physical connotations the *σπλάγχν*-word group could convey. However,

38 The term *σπλαγχνισμός* is unattested elsewhere prior to the third century CE.

39 In fact, the section concludes with “Let this be enough, then, about the eating of sacrifices [*σπλαγχνισμός*] and the extreme tortures” (NRSV).

40 Cp. Ps 30:9; 115:17; Isa 38:18.

Hellenistic Jewish authors were also quite comfortable using these terms to express metaphorical meanings, as we will now explore.

In many instances, the *σπλάγχνα* are viewed as the seat of emotions, a repository for emotional reactions and, in turn, a source for emotional expressions. Occasionally *σπλάγχνα* could be used in this way where no specific emotion is indicated—it is simply the place where emotions are housed. For example, in Sirach, the *σπλάγχνα* of a foolish person are compared to the wheel of a cart (Sir 33:5). In the second half of the couplet, the thoughts of such a person are similarly likened to a turning axle. The contents of the *σπλάγχνα* here—clearly not physical—like the contents of the mind, are always in motion, never stable, in such a person, whereas the wise have the law as a dependable, steady foundation (33:3). In the *Testament of Naphtali*, as Jacob expresses belief that his son Joseph is still alive, Naphtali weeps and comments, “I burned in my inner parts (*σπλάγχνα*) to declare that he was sold” (*T. Naph.* 7.4). One can envision that anguish or perhaps sympathy might be the emotion being stirred here, though it is not explicitly named. In the *Testament of Benjamin*, Joseph is said to have asked his father Jacob to pray for his brothers who had wronged him, that God would forgive them. Jacob responds by extolling Joseph for his goodness, stating that Joseph “has overcome the *σπλάγχνα* of his father, Jacob” (3.7).⁴¹ Again, the precise emotion that is in view as festering in the *σπλάγχνα* is unspecified—anger is likely, though grief is also possible.⁴²

However, more often than not in this literature, a particular emotion is in view as being harbored in the *σπλάγχνα*. The author of 4 Maccabees was concerned to display the superiority of reason to emotion,⁴³ and the quintessential example offered is of the mother of seven sons who were put to death by Antiochus on account of their loyalty to the Jewish law. According to the author, a loving mother has a natural tendency to feel sympathy (*συμπάθη*) in her inner parts (*σπλάγχνα*) for her children (14:13). But this mother, who was guided by reason rather than by emotion, had her *σπλάγχνα* infused with manly courage, which allowed her to set aside her feelings of sympathy (15:23).⁴⁴ The author

41 Here H. W. Hollander and M. de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 417, translate *σπλάγχνα* with the general term “feelings,” implying that what is overcome is emotion in general. This same notion of overcoming the *σπλάγχνα* appears in 4 Maccabees (see later discussion), a text heavily influenced by Stoic philosophy. The push to overcome emotion is certainly not standard in the *Testaments*, as evidenced especially in the *Testament of Zebulun* (for more on *T. Zeb.*, see later treatment).

42 Hollander and de Jonge, *Testaments*, 419, suggest that anger is implied.

43 See 4 Macc 11–9.

44 On the gender dynamics at play in this passage, see Mirguet, *Early History of Compassion*, 129–49.

later identifies the mother's experience as a contest within her *σπλάγχνα* (τοῦ διὰ σπλάγχνων ἀγῶνος, 15:29). She earned the prize of this contest by withstanding the pull of her passions—namely, sympathy for her children (15:29–32). Interestingly, the author does not discount the notion that the *σπλάγχνα* are the seat of emotions, in this case, for sympathy. Rather, reason is capable of influencing the types of feelings (or perhaps thoughts) that arise therein.⁴⁵

In addition to producing feelings of sympathy, the *σπλάγχνα* could be the source of an individual feeling distressed or troubled. The author of Sirach argues for the importance of firm discipline in the proper upbringing of a son (Sir 30:1–13), contrasting such an approach with pampering a son and leaving him unprepared for the difficulties of life. He thus warns against showing excessive care when a son is injured or upset, condemning the father whose *σπλάγχνα* are troubled (ταράσσω) at the cries of his child (30:7). Here the *σπλάγχνα* are viewed as the source of distress, an expression to be suppressed in this case. Similarly, in the Psalms of Solomon, the author expresses distress over the sins committed by the people of Jerusalem, for which they were now under attack from a foreign army as part of God's judgment. This distress is described as arising from the *σπλάγχνα* (2:14).⁴⁶

In a story from the *Testament of Abraham*, weeping is seen as arising from the stirring of the *σπλάγχνα* (3.7–12, recension A). After Isaac has a dream pertaining to his own death, he rushes to his father Abraham to embrace him and share with him the dream. This leads to Abraham's *σπλάγχνα* being “moved” (συγκινέω) and the subsequent response of weeping (κλαίω, 5.25). The angel who was visiting Abraham at the time also cried in response to witnessing their crying.⁴⁷

Finally, in addition to being used to describe the seat of varying emotions (either specified or unspecified), *σπλάγχνα* came to be employed as a descriptor of a specific emotion—compassion. This particular emotion came to be viewed as so connected to the *σπλάγχνα* that the Greek term itself took on the specific notion of compassion. For example, in Wisdom of Solomon, the

45 For another instance where sympathy is alluded to as the content of someone's *σπλάγχνα*, see *T. Sim.* 2.4, where Simeon is characterized as having bold initiative, due in part to his lack of emotion and concern for others: “For my heart was hard and my liver was immovable and my bowels [*σπλάγχνα*] were without sympathy” (translation is from Hollander and de Jonge, *Commentary*, 111).

46 Pss. Sol. 2:14 reads: τὴν κοιλίαν μου καὶ τὰ σπλάγχνα μου πονῶ ἐπὶ τούτοις (“I am distressed in my belly and bowels upon these things”). The precise distinction between *κοιλία* and *σπλάγχνον* here is unclear, but taken together, the statement gives the impression of deep inner turmoil.

47 See also *T. Ab.* 5.39, which uses the same language in the angel's response to Sarah, who questioned the reason for the crying; and the discussion of *T. Ab.* 3.7–12 in chapter 3.

writer, reflecting on how wisdom was working in the people of God from the beginning, states regarding Abraham, “She [Wisdom] ... knew the righteous one [Abraham] and kept him blameless before God and guarded his strength amid compassion [σπλάγχνα] for his child” (Wis 10:5). This description of Abraham in the near sacrifice of Isaac is similar to the portrayal of the mother of the martyred brothers in 4 Maccabees, whose inherent sympathy is overcome by reason. But whereas in 4 Maccabees the term συμπάθη is used to refer to the emotional content of the σπλάγχνα, here the emotion is itself referred to as σπλάγχνα. In the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, the term σπλάγχνα is used to refer to the future visitation of God’s compassion. For example, the *Testament of Levi* 4.4 states, “A blessing will be given to you [Levi] and to all your seed, until the Lord will visit all the nations in the compassion [σπλάγχνα] of his son forever.” This coming compassion is personified in the *Testament of Naphtali*: “And the Lord scatters them [the disobedient people of Israel] upon the face of all the earth, until the compassion [σπλάγχνον, singular] of the Lord comes, a man doing righteousness and mercy unto all who are far off and who are near (4.5).”⁴⁸

The compound terms εὐσπλαγχνος and εὐσπλαγχνία were also used in this way—to denote the notion of compassion itself. The *Prayer of Manasseh* contains a description of God as εὐσπλαγχνος, μακρόθυμος καὶ πολυέλεος (“compassionate, patient, and full of mercy,” 1:7). In the *Testament of Simeon*, Joseph is depicted as εὐσπλαγχνος (“compassionate”) in his forgiveness of Simeon (4.4). Elsewhere in the *Testaments*, the compassion (εὐσπλαγχνία) of Joseph is a model for the other brothers to follow (*T. Benj.* 4.1). Finally, in the *Testament of Asher*, the children of Israel are encouraged by the hope that God would gather the scattered ones in his compassion (εὐσπλαγχνία, 7.7). While it is understandable how these terms with a εὐ- prefix would be linked specifically with feelings of compassion—a “good” response to a situation—it is unclear what precipitated the sufficiency of using the simple term σπλάγχνον in this way. Nonetheless, as we have seen, σπλάγχνον became an acceptable way to describe not only the seat of various emotions but also a specific expression of one of those emotions.

Terms from the σπλάγχν- root are rare in the LXX’s translation of Hebrew Scriptures. In Proverbs 12:10, the LXX reads,

48 We will discuss the dating of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, but it is not surprising that passages such as these have been considered Christian interpolations; see Hollander and de Jonge, *Commentary*, 142, 309. Regarding the passage from *T. Napht.*, Hollander and de Jonge draw comparison with wording from Acts of John 24 (dated to the late second century CE): ἐκάλεσε τὰ τέλεια σπλάγχνα (“he [John] called upon the perfect compassion [Jesus]”).

A just one takes pity on the lives of his animals,
 but the inner parts [σπλάγχνα; MT רחמים] of the ungodly are without
 mercy.

The contrast is stark: While a righteous person displays pity even upon animals, the ungodly are void of such pity within their core (their σπλάγχνα are empty of mercy). Here, σπλάγχνα is used where the Hebrew text has רחמים, a word that often denotes compassion. However, this is the only instance in the LXX in which a term from the root רחם is rendered by σπλάγχνα. Typically, רחם and cognates are rendered by ἔλεος or οἶκτος and cognates.⁴⁹

In Proverbs 26:22, σπλάγχνα is used to translate the term בטן, “belly.” The LXX version reads,

The words of knaves are soft,
 but they strike into the chamber of the inner parts [σπλάγχνα].

In this caution against being influenced by the gentle appearance of a deceitful person's words, the proverb implies that the σπλάγχνα are the place where deep feelings occur—i.e., as a seat of emotions.

The only occurrence outside of Proverbs of a σπλάγχνα- term in the LXX translation of Hebrew Scriptures is in Jeremiah. A translation of the Greek reads,

Though encamping by many waters
 and by the magnitude of her treasures,
 your end has truly come
 into your inner parts [σπλάγχνα, 28:13/HB 51:13].

Part of an oracle against Babylon, the use of σπλάγχνα here is ambiguous. It could be a physical reference (i.e., the Lord's arrows, referred to in Jer 28:12, would penetrate the inner parts of his enemies). Or it may allude to the inner emotional turmoil that would come upon the Babylonians. The final line of the verse in the LXX differs considerably from the MT, which reads, “Your end has come, the limit of your thread.”⁵⁰ The LXX thus employs a different image to speak of the finality of Babylon's days.

49 Mirguet, *Early History of Compassion*, 35–36. Mirguet raises the possibility that the use of σπλάγχνα for compassion is a result of the influence of רחמים, a plural form from רחם, meaning “womb.” Based on the singular instance in the LXX (Prov 12:10), Mirguet concludes that such an association, if true, must have been a relatively late development (i.e., toward the end of the production of the LXX).

50 The Hebrew expression אמת בצעך means literally “the cubit of your being cut off” (Gerald L. Keown, Pamela J. Scalise, and Thomas G. Smothers, *Jeremiah 26–52*, WBC 27

The sparse use of *σπλάγχνα* in the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures suggests that the prevalence of *σπλάγχν*- language used in a metaphorical sense in Hellenistic Jewish literature stems not from a perceived correspondence to meanings associated with specific Hebrew terms but rather reflects a development taking place among Hellenistic Jewish authors themselves.

A final text to treat here is the *Testament of Zebulun*, which has been reserved for this point because it serves as a climax to the discussion, given its heavy use of *σπλάγχν*- terms. This testament, which in some manuscripts bears the title *Περὶ εὐσπλαγχνίας καὶ ἔλεους*, focuses on the proper reaction to the distress and affliction of others. Whereas in the LXX *σπλάγχν*- terms are relatively rare (occurring a total of twenty times) and appear only a few times in translation texts (i.e., those with a Hebrew *Vorlage*), in the relatively short *Testament of Zebulun* *σπλάγχν*- terms occur twenty-one times.⁵¹

In terms of function, *σπλάγχνον* generally refers in the *Testament of Zebulun* to the seat of emotions. For example, when Joseph is being attacked by his brothers, he pleads, “Have compassion [οἰκτίρω] upon the inner parts [σπλάγχνα] of Jacob our father” (2.2). Joseph seeks to use the state of their father’s feelings as a motivator in his attempt to avoid death. Immediately after these words, the state of Zebulun’s *σπλάγχνα* demonstrates what would happen to Jacob, though presumably on a greater scale: “I began to weep, and my liver was poured out within me, and all the substance of my inner parts [σπλάγχνα] was weakened up to my soul” (2.4).

More often than not in the *Testament of Zebulun* when the specific emotion pouring forth from the *σπλάγχνα* is mentioned, it is *ἔλεος* (pity or mercy). For example, *Testament of Zebulun* 5.3–4 reads,

Therefore, have mercy [ἔλεος] in your inner parts [σπλάγχνα], my children, for as one does to his neighbor, thus also the Lord will do to him. For also the sons of my brothers became weak, were dying, on account of Joseph, for they did not show mercy [ἔλεος] in their inner parts [σπλάγχνα].⁵²

[Dallas: Word Books, 1995], 369).

51 Hollander and de Jonge, *Commentary*, 255, point out that while οἰκτος and its cognates appear frequently in the LXX, often translating *חַנּוּן*, they are rare in the *Testaments*. Hollander and de Jonge suggest that the frequent use of *σπλάγχν*- terms in the *Testament of Zebulun* betrays a connection to early Christian usage (e.g., in the Synoptic Gospels), which aligns with their viewpoint that the *Testaments* display significant Christian interpolation (rather than being essentially Jewish texts with minor Christian revisions). For a recent critique of this position, see David A. DeSilva, “The *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* as Witnesses to Pre-Christian Judaism: A Re-Assessment,” *JSP* 22.4 (2013): 21–68.

52 See also *T. Zeb.* 7.3; 8.2, 6.

Elsewhere, sympathy or “fellow-feeling” (συμπάθεια) is connected with the σπλάγχνα, along with ἔλεος:

But if for a time you do not have to give to one in need, have sympathy [συμπάσχω] in feelings [σπλάγχνα] of mercy [ἔλεος]. I know that my hand did not find for the present to give to the one in need, and for seven stadia walking with him I was crying, and my inner parts [σπλάγχνα] were turning toward him in sympathy [συμπάθεια]. (7:3–4)

In the climactic paraenetic section of the *Testament* (8.1–6), in which the patriarch exhorts his children to extend compassion and mercy to all, σπλάγχνα–terms appear eight times.⁵³ Some of these are “seat of emotion” references as mentioned earlier, but in other instances, specific feelings of compassion are in view. For example, in the central exhortation of 8.1, the text reads, “Therefore, you also, my children, have compassion [ἔχετε εὐσπλάγχνιαν] toward every man in mercy.” The patriarch then gives as a motivating factor the notion that in the last days God will “send his compassion [σπλάγχνον, a rare singular] upon the earth” (8.2). This statement echoes the wording of *Testament of Naphtali* 4.5 discussed above, though here the eschatological context is more explicit.

Finally, in the *Testament of Zebulun* 9.7–8, the focus shifts to God’s compassion (using the compounds εὐσπλάγχνία and εὐσπλάγχνος), which he would extend toward his people following their time of exile. The patriarch thus not only holds himself up as an example of the compassion which is proper as a response to another’s suffering, he also points to the divine example, whose compassion is to be imitated—and whose compassion would return upon those who show compassion toward others (8.1–2).

The uncertainty regarding the dating of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* prevents one from drawing firm conclusions regarding potential influence of the *Testaments* on the texts of the New Testament (or vice versa). The varying opinions concerning their date are connected to the two main viewpoints regarding the provenance of the extant texts.⁵⁴ One perspective asserts that

53 In the *Testament of Zebulun*, the extension of compassion gets progressively broader, from a family member (brother), to the generic “someone in need,” to eventually all human beings here in section 8 (though in 5.1, there is an exhortation to have compassion [εὐσπλάγχνία] toward all, including animals). Mirguet (*Early History of Compassion*, 208), speaking of this progression, states: “The structure of the *Testament* evokes Hierocles’s circles, as the text urges showing compassion to others increasingly more distant from the self: brother, neighbors, and finally all human beings. Through compassion, the unrelated other is imagined to be kin.”

54 See the discussion of dating in Mirguet, *Early History of Compassion*, 50.

the *Testaments* are essentially Jewish, with some Christian interpolation that has had little effect on the core.⁵⁵ This perspective yields the notion that these texts originated prior to the first century CE. The other common viewpoint contends that the *Testaments* contain a significant amount of distinctly Christian material, such that a pre-Christian form—if it ever existed—is difficult to distinguish.⁵⁶ As such, the texts, as we have them, would date to around the second or third century CE. In a 2013 article, David DeSilva presents a case that the *Testaments* have frequently been overly Christianized in modern scholarship, and he analyzes a number of pertinent excerpts from the *Testaments* to show that many of the so-called Christian interpolations could actually be at home within Second Temple Judaism.⁵⁷ Due to the degree of uncertainty regarding this issue, perhaps the best approach at this point is to take a median position along the lines of what Françoise Mirguet proposes: “The *Testaments* bear witness to the significant degree of overlap between Christian and Jewish communities during the first centuries of the era.”⁵⁸ While we cannot make a conclusive determination regarding the potential awareness of the *Testaments* by the author of Mark (or vice versa), we can see similar ideas in relation to the increasingly metaphorical connotations of the σπλάγχν- terms.

A final development within Hellenistic Jewish writings that has significant import as we prepare to turn to the Gospel of Mark is the emergence of the verb σπλάγχνιζομαι. Unattested in Greco-Roman writings prior to the first century CE,⁵⁹ this verb appears twice in the LXX. It also occurs seven times in the

55 See, e.g., R. H. Charles, *The Greek Versions of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1908); Jarl H. Ulrichsen, *Die Grundschrift der Testamente der zwölf Patriarchen. Eine Untersuchung zu Umfang, Inhalt und Eigenart der ursprünglichen Schrift*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Historia Religionum 10 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1991); Howard C. Kee, “The Ethical Dimensions of the XII as a Clue to Provenance,” *NTS* 24 (1978): 259–70.

56 See, e.g., Hollander and de Jonge, *Testaments: Commentary*; Robert A. Kugler, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001).

57 DeSilva, “The Testaments: A Re-assessment.”

58 Mirguet, *Early History of Compassion*, 50.

59 The only instance of the verb in a non-Jewish/non-Christian text that may date to before the second century CE occurs in a magical text attributed to Cyranides. In the third book of this work, which is about birds, the author speaks of a bird that has certain curative properties, extracted from the bird's gall and blood. A story is relayed concerning the aggressive young of this bird species, which begin attacking the older birds of the species, leading to the older birds killing the young ones. The mother of the young is “moved with compassion” [σπλάγχνιζομαι] in lamentation regarding these events, and she proceeds to tear open her own sides, spilling her blood over her young, causing them inexplicably to resuscitate (3.39).

Testament of Zebulun, and twice each in the *Apocalypse of Moses* (*Life of Adam and Eve*) and the *Testament of Abraham*.

In 2 Maccabees, *σπλαγχνίζομαι* is used once to describe the partaking of sacrifices (6:8). The reference is to the unlawful sacrifices the Jews were being compelled to participate in as part of the forced Hellenization occurring during the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Elsewhere, 2 Maccabees employs the noun *σπλαγχνισμός* to refer to the partaking of these sacrifices (6:7, 21; 7:42). This constitutes the only instance in Hellenistic Jewish (or early Christian) literature in which the verb *σπλαγχνίζομαι* carries a sacrificial meaning—a prevailing connotation of *σπλάγχνον* in the Greco-Roman world. So the meaning associated with the verb here—having clear connections to the broad understanding of *σπλάγχνον*—did not seem to carry forward into other Jewish works.

The only other occurrence of the verb in the LXX comes in Proverbs:

He who laughs at the poor provokes the one who made him,
and he who rejoices at one being destroyed will not be held guiltless;
but the one having compassion [*ἐπισπλαγχνίζόμενος*] will be pitied. (17:5)

The form *ἐπισπλαγχνίζομαι* is unattested elsewhere prior to the second century CE, but here it follows the pattern of other compound forms of *σπλαγχν-* words in having a metaphorical connotation.⁶⁰ The entire third line of this verse may be original to the LXX (it does not appear in the MT).⁶¹ If this is the case, then the Hebrew text focuses entirely on negative responses to others' suffering (and the consequence that results), while the Greek text supplies a positive alternative response, which generates divine mercy or pity.⁶² This notion of receiving divine mercy as a motivation for extending compassion toward others also appears in the *Testament of Zebulun*, as previously discussed. It is notable that in both Proverbs and the *Testament of Zebulun*, *σπλαγχν-* terms are used to describe the human response toward others, while a different term, *ἔλεος/ἐλεέω*, is used for the divine response. As discussed in the previous chapter, *ἔλεος* and cognates, as used throughout Greco-Roman literature, inherently suggest a power differential. Extending *ἔλεος* ("pity" or "mercy") toward

60 Mirguet, *Early History of Compassion*, 107, includes *ἐπισπλαγχνίζομαι* alongside *ἐλεημοσύνη* ("almsgiving") as terms that originated within Hellenistic Judaism. She states, "While the Greek notion of pity is used to translate a range of Hebrew terms, it is not simply assimilated; it is also applied to new contexts and reinterpreted. Its integration into the [Greek] scriptural vocabulary prompts the creation of new terms and discourses."

61 MT reads, לֹא יִצְחָק עַל עֲשָׂהוּ שְׂמֵחַ לְאִידָא ("He who mocks the poor reproaches his maker; he who rejoices at calamity will not go unpunished").

62 See Mirguet, *Early History of Compassion*, 78.

another was the prerogative of one capable of doing so. Perhaps in *σπλάγχνα* and *σπλαγχνίζομαι*, Jewish writers found an alternative term that did not carry the same implications regarding power and status.

We have already discussed the *Testament of Zebulun* and its proclivity to use *σπλάγχνα*. The verb *σπλαγχνίζομαι* also appears throughout the *Testament*.⁶³ Each occurrence of the verb connotes the experience of having compassion. And as we saw earlier in the *Testament of Zebulun*, this compassion can be extended beyond close or familiar relationships. The eponymous patriarch could feel compassion for his mistreated brother Joseph such that he was unable to eat (4.2). He could experience compassion for a person without clothing in winter, such that he stole a garment from his household to provide for them (7.1). And he could have compassion for all strangers, such that he gave fish to every stranger who passed by (6.4). These demonstrations of Zebulun's compassion lead up to the injunction to have compassion toward all (7.2; 8.3). Once again, on account of this display of compassion toward others, the Lord, who is himself compassionate, would extend mercy or pity to the one showing compassion (8.1). Like Zebulun, Joseph himself displayed this kind of compassion when he did not retaliate against his brothers in Egypt (8.4). Throughout this text, then, *σπλαγχνίζομαι* is connected with practical action extended to those in need. The emotional stirring or movement within described by this term motivates Zebulun (or Joseph) to act. And the text as a whole, with all its *σπλάγχν-* terms, enjoins upon its audience a proper response to the pain and suffering of others—not simply one's kin, but all people.

Both the *Testament of Abraham* and the *Life of Adam and Eve* were discussed in chapter 3 as the only texts potentially originating prior to the second century CE (other than the Gospels) that connect *σπλάγχν-* language to the performance of a miracle.⁶⁴ There is one additional appearance of *σπλαγχνίζομαι* in the *Life of Adam and Eve* not connected to a miracle. In the Greek text (the *Apocalypse of Moses*),⁶⁵ at the point when Adam is being expelled from the garden, he begs the angels casting him out to pause long enough to give him the opportunity to ask God to have compassion on [*σπλαγχνίζομαι*] and pity [*ἐλεέω*] him (Apoc. Mos. 27.3–4). As in the other instance of *σπλαγχνίζομαι* in the *Apocalypse of Moses* (discussed in chapter 3), in which God is likewise requested to show compassion, the appeal is rejected. God is shown to have

63 *T. Zeb.* 4.2; 6.4; 7.1, 2; 8.1, 3–4.

64 As noted in chapter 3, both these texts may have originated sometime after the first century CE, and in any case, likely after the composition of the Gospel of Mark.

65 The Latin text (*Vita Adam et Evae*) has no parallel here.

judged rightly in banishing Adam from the garden; compassion is not at issue from God's perspective.

We see in Jewish literature, in comparison to the wider Greco-Roman literature, an increasing metaphorical use of *σπλάγχχ*- terms. In fact, outside of Philo and Josephus, such usage appears to become prevalent. Further, the use of *σπλάγχχνα* as a descriptor for the seat of various emotions begins to give way to the metonymical use of *σπλάγχχνα* and its cognates with specific reference to the emotion of compassion that arises from that seat.

3 Early Christian Literature

Early Christian literature reflects a similar tendency as the one we have seen in Hellenistic Jewish literature. While in the New Testament the verb *σπλάγχχνίζομαι* occurs only in the Gospels,⁶⁶ *σπλάγχχνα* appears elsewhere, as do a couple of compound forms (*εὐσπλάγχχνος*, Eph 4:32; 1 Pet 3:8; and *πολύσπλάγχχνος*, Jas 5:11). With the exception of one instance in Acts, in which *σπλάγχχνα* is employed in a purely physical sense, in a graphic description of Judas's death (Acts 1:18), every other instance of *σπλάγχχνα* in the New Testament has a metaphorical meaning. It sometimes refers to the compassion of God (Luke 1:78; Jas 5:11). Other times, it refers to the compassion⁶⁷ of the early Jesus followers (2 Cor 7:15; Phil 2:1; 1 John 3:17),⁶⁸ an attribute which is commanded alongside other desirable traits such as kindness, love, sympathy, humility, and patience (Eph 4:32; Col 3:12; 1 Pet 3:8). In his letter to the church at Philippi, Paul connects his longing for the Philippians to the compassion [*σπλάγχχνα*] of Christ (Phil 1:8). This reference to Christ's *σπλάγχχνα* is likely the earliest known use of a *σπλάγχχ*- term in relation to Jesus. For Paul here, the compassion of Christ is viewed as something to be imitated, to the point that a follower of Christ such as himself has the same *σπλάγχχνα* at his disposal.⁶⁹ Finally, in Paul's letter to Philemon, the term appears three times. Twice it denotes the seat of emotions (Phlm 7, 20). Paul describes the *σπλάγχχνα* of the believers being refreshed by Philemon (Phlm 7). He then requests that the same refreshment of the *σπλάγχχνα* be given to him from Philemon through the positive response to his

66 Our discussion of the verb in the Gospel of Mark will be the primary emphasis of chapter 5.

67 Or the lack thereof, as in 2 Cor 6:12.

68 This instance in 1 John functions essentially like a "seat of emotions" kind of reference, as it refers to the closing up of one's *σπλάγχχνα*, but the content of the *σπλάγχχνα* being suppressed is, by implication, compassion, given the context of helping (or not helping) someone in need.

69 For more on the notion of imitating Christ's *σπλάγχχνα*, see chapter 5.

request regarding Onesimus (Phlm 20). A third reference in Philemon constitutes an exceptional usage, as Paul refers to Onesimus himself as his *σπλάγχνα* (Phlm 12). Here, the matter of Onesimus's reception by Philemon stirs up such deep feelings for Paul that he depicts his very *σπλάγχνα* as making the journey to Colosse, perhaps in the same way that Paul could view himself as bearing the *σπλάγχνα* of Christ in his feelings toward the Philippians.

In the Apostolic Fathers, physical connotations for *σπλάγχνα* and cognates completely give way to the metaphorical. God's compassion is referred to using the term *σπλάγχνα* (1 *Clem.* 14:3; 23:1; 29:1), as is the compassion exhibited by the followers of Christ (1 *Clem.* 54:1; *Ign. Phld.* 10:1, *Herm.* 101.2).⁷⁰ Such compassion becomes for Polycarp, in his epistle to the Philippians, a qualification for both deacons (5:2) and presbyters (6:1).

The verb *σπλαγχνίζομαι* occurs frequently in the *Shepherd of Hermas* and once in 2 *Clement*, both texts likely being composed sometime in the second century CE.⁷¹ Throughout *Hermas*, *σπλαγχνίζομαι* is connected with repentance, a major theme of the work. It is because of God's compassion that he offers the prospect of repentance and salvation to all.⁷² The only use of *σπλαγχνίζομαι* in *Hermas* in which God is not the subject appears in reference to the "angel of punishment," who lacks compassion toward those who are unrepentant (63:2). The connection between God's having compassion [*σπλαγχνίζομαι*] and the salvation which he offers is present also in the single instance of the verb in 2 *Clement*; however, here the subject is Jesus:

For he had pity [ἐλέεω] on us and having compassion [*σπλαγχνισθείς*] he saved [us], though seeing in us much error and destruction, and having no hope of salvation, except that which is from him. (2 *Clem* 1:7)

In these early Christian texts, most of which emerged between the late first and second century CE, we see a continuation of *σπλάγχν*- terms being used to describe compassion, particularly that of God in bringing deliverance and that of his followers in extending similar compassion to others.

70 In the reference from Ignatius's letter to the Philadelphians, which reads "according to the compassion [*σπλάγχνα*] which you have in Christ Jesus," we may see another intentional push for imitating Christ's *σπλάγχνα*, though perhaps not as explicit as in the passage from Paul's letter to the Philippians.

71 See the discussions regarding the dates of these texts in Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 133–35; 445–47.

72 *Herm.* 20:3; 31:5; 66:4; 72:3; 77:1; 91:3. The only exception in which *σπλαγχνίζομαι* is used outside the context of repentance comes in 39:3, where God's compassion is linked generally to his answering his people's prayers.

4 Concluding Observations

Having examined the use of *σπλάγχων* and cognates in numerous texts from the ancient Greco-Roman and Jewish world, what conclusions may be drawn regarding its meaning, development, and function as we prepare to turn to its usage in the Gospel of Mark? A few observations can be made.

First, the term *σπλάγχων*, which in the Greco-Roman world originally carried a purely physical meaning indicating the inner organs of a person or animal—a vital section of the body that held a prominent place in sacrificial contexts and in divination practices—came to be used frequently in Hellenistic Jewish literature to describe the area of the body from which certain emotions arise. As we have seen, such a connotation scarcely occurs in Greco-Roman literature and is almost entirely relegated to compound forms used by playwrights.⁷³ And in a further development seen in Hellenistic Jewish literature, the primary emotion which came to be viewed as associated with the *σπλάγχνα* was compassion, to the point that *σπλάγχνα* often took on the meaning “compassion” itself rather than simply the location in the body from which it purportedly emerges.

Second, in *σπλάγχν-* terms, Jewish authors seem to have found a way to describe an emotional response to the pain and suffering of others that is distinct from the terms more frequently found in the LXX, including *ἔλεος* and *οἶκτος* and their cognates. In this Jewish literature, *σπλάγχνα* is often paired with these terms—especially *ἔλεος*—and in fact, *ἔλεος* is sometimes considered the content of the *σπλάγχνα* when it is used as the seat of emotions. But when *σπλάγχν-* terms take on the meaning “compassion” itself, it is an emotional response distinct from *ἔλεος*. *Σπλάγχνα* and cognates did not seem to carry the power differential between giver and recipient that was inherent in the use of *ἔλεος* and seems to have arisen out of a desire to describe a deep, somatic-emotional response to the pain and suffering of others.⁷⁴ This sort of descriptiveness of emotion may have been known from the use of compound

73 Regarding the prevalence of *σπλάγχν-* terms in Hellenistic Jewish literature, Mirguet, *Early History of Compassion*, 187, concludes that while “from a strictly lexical point of view, the use of pity in Jewish sources does not differ from contemporaneous literary productions” the use of the root *σπλάγχν-* constitutes a “notable exception” as it is “almost never used for emotional responses to others’ pain outside of Jewish (and Christian) literature.”

74 Along these lines, Mirguet, *Early History of Compassion*, 183, contends that the texts of Hellenistic Judaism, in their emphasis on “the affective dimension of responses to others’ pain,” assert that such responses are part of human nature and are common to all human beings. Informed by texts like the *Testament of Zebulun*, wherein compassion [*σπλάγχνα*] toward all is envisaged, Mirguet goes on to say, “Compassion, as a natural emotion, can be felt by anyone and for anyone, without distinction, since it proceeds from a drive that is common to all, preceding particular ethical codifications.”

σπλάγχν- terms in ancient Greek plays, but in Hellenistic Jewish literature, it takes on a new level of usage, which includes the employment (perhaps introduction) of the verb σπλάγχνιζομαι as a way of explicitly portraying the extension of this emotional response toward others.

Third, there is not a clear sense that in Hellenistic Jewish and early Christian literature, σπλάγχν- terms were especially conducive to having either a divine subject or a human subject. In the Gospels, σπλάγχνιζομαι has only Jesus as a subject in the narrative material, but the literature surveyed in this chapter does not lend credence to the notion that by using this term, the Gospel writers were attempting to make claims regarding either Jesus' humanity or his divinity.⁷⁵

Finally, as already demonstrated in chapters 2 and 3, but which bears repeating here, there is no precedent in Greco-Roman or Jewish literature clearly dating prior to the Gospel of Mark of a miracle worker being described with the term σπλάγχνον or its cognates. As chapters 2 and 3 showed, numerous examples exist in which emotion language could be employed to describe a miracle worker. And as shown in the present chapter, Jewish authors of the Hellenistic and early Roman periods were quite capable of using σπλάγχν- terms metaphorically. Nonetheless, in all these texts, no move was made to depict a miracle worker's emotional response in this way.⁷⁶

After closely examining σπλάγχνον and cognates in the literature of the Hellenistic and early Roman periods, and tracing the emergence of the verb σπλάγχνιζομαι, what definition might we offer at this point for this verb that Mark takes up in his account of the miracles of Jesus? Based on the traditional, *physical* connotations of σπλάγχνον and cognates—connotations that still

75 Stephen Voorwinde argues that the expressions of Jesus' compassion in the Gospels are reflective of his divine nature (see Voorwinde, *Jesus' Emotions in the Gospels*, 71, 87–88, 96, 118, 127). Voorwinde is following Köster, who concluded regarding the use of σπλάγχνιζομαι in the Gospels that it "is always used to describe the attitude of Jesus and it characterises the divine nature of his acts" (Helmut Köster, "σπλάγχνιζομαι," *TDNT* 7:553–55, cited in Voorwinde, *Jesus' Emotions in the Gospels*, 24). For Voorwinde, this conclusion arises, at least in part, from the idea that σπλάγχνιζομαι is a counterpart to the ספח word group in the Hebrew Scriptures, a set of terms that is usually used with reference to God's compassion (Voorwinde, *Jesus' Emotions in the Gospels*, 42–43). As noted earlier, however, we only have one instance from Hellenistic Jewish literature (Prov 12:10, LXX) where a σπλάγχν- term is used to translate ספח. It should also be noted that in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37), σπλάγχνιζομαι has the Samaritan as its subject, suggesting that such compassion is possible, even encouraged, among Jesus' non-divine followers—a notion also present elsewhere in the New Testament, as the examples of early Christian literature surveyed in the present chapter indicate.

76 As noted earlier, the metaphorical use of σπλάγχνον and cognates is sparse in Philo and non-existent in Josephus—the two Jewish writers of the time period who relay the greatest number of miracle stories.

dominated in Greco-Roman literature in the first century CE and that were still known and employed in Jewish literature at the time—it seems premature to detach completely even the clearly metaphorical uses of these words from their physical component.⁷⁷ As such, *σπλαγχνίζομαι* may be defined as a deep, somatic-emotional response that feels with and for the other who is experiencing pain, and which inherently leads to action.⁷⁸ The English term *compassion*—“suffer with”—is perhaps the most apt choice for translation, though our notion of empathy—feeling with someone as though experiencing the feelings oneself—has some overlap here as well.⁷⁹ The term seems to involve a fellow-feeling similar to empathy that engenders a desire to act akin to compassion. For ease, we will continue to employ the traditional term “compassion,” rendering the verb “moved with compassion” in an attempt to capture the sense of “internal stirring” involved. Now, in chapter 5, we turn to the Gospel of Mark and our examination of how the use of the term *σπλαγχνίζομαι* contributes to the characterization of the Markan Jesus.

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- 77 The *Testament of Zebulun*, which as noted above is littered with *σπλαγχν-* terminology, presents a very physical depiction of emotional reaction (see, e.g., *T. Zeb.* 2:4–5: “And as he said these words, I came to compassion, and I began to weep, and my liver was poured out within me, and all the substance of my inner parts was weakened up to my soul. And Joseph also wept and I with him, and my heart throbbed, and the joints of my body were shaken and I was not able to stand”). Here, the compassion portrayed through the term *σπλαγχνον* is clearly not simply a cognitive response, detached from the rest of the body; rather, it involves a somatic experience. So Mirguet states, “In the opening scene of the *Testament of Zebulun*, compassion is deeply embodied, shaking organs and making them porous; it is thus quite close to an instinctual reaction” (*Early History of Compassion*, 210).
- 78 For similar definitions along these lines, see Mirguet, who glosses *ἐσπλαγγνία* and cognates as “an embodied (gut-felt) response” (*Early History of Compassion*, 6) and elsewhere states that *σπλαγχνίζομαι* “evokes a gut-felt response to the other person’s pain” (*Early History of Compassion*, 176); James L. Bailey, “Church as Embodiment of Jesus’ Mission (Matthew 9:36–10:39),” *CurTM* 30 no. 3 (2003): 190: “The Greek word translated ‘compassion’ implies a visceral response to the plight of others, allowing one to connect with their pain”; see also R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 373: “No single English term does justice to [*σπλαγχνίζομαι*]: compassion, pity, sympathy, and fellow feeling all convey part of it, but ‘his heart went out’ perhaps represents more fully the emotional force of the underlying metaphor of a ‘gut response.’”
- 79 So Mirguet, in discussing the use of the root *σπλαγχν-* in the *Testament of Zebulun*, states, “The compassionate person embraces the emotions of the one in pain; compassion mirrors, within the self, the pain affecting the other” (*Early History of Compassion*, 61); and also “Compassion, as described in the *Testament of Zebulun*, mirrors, within the self, what the distressed other experiences, affectively and physically. This ‘pain by proxy’ allows the perception of a shared vulnerability between the one in pain and the self” (*Early History of Compassion*, 182–83).

Σπλαγχνίζομαι and the Markan Jesus

We have examined the use of emotion language in miracle stories of both Greco-Roman and Jewish literature. In chapter 2, we found that in Greco-Roman miracle accounts, emotion language is rather sparse, particularly in the late Hellenistic and early Roman periods, and is almost exclusively relegated to divine figures (the joy of Vespasian being an exception).¹ In these accounts, the portrayal of a god's pity seems to reinforce the distance between the divine figure and the human beneficiary. The miracles themselves are generally driven by the overarching objectives of the miracle workers, making the emotions displayed of secondary importance as a motivation for the miracle. The frequently used term ἐλεέω (and cognates) seems to provide a fitting way to maintain this distance.

In our analysis of Jewish literature in chapter 3, we found a more widespread use of emotion language in miracle accounts, increasingly so in the late Hellenistic and early Roman periods. A large number of texts underscore the pity or compassion of the miracle worker. As in Greco-Roman texts, the miracle worker in such cases is typically divine, though there are a few more exceptions.² The majority of texts examined reflected a dichotomy between the righteous people of God, who were recipients of God's pity or compassion, and the enemies of God and God's people, who were recipients of God's anger. By demonstrating that pity or compassion was a crucial Jewish concept, Jewish writers could present the Jewish people both as having the honorable status capable of bestowing pity on others and as having the desire—in emulation of their God—to do so.

Regarding both corpora of texts, it was observed that Mark's first-century audience likely had at least some familiarity—based on an awareness of either Homeric texts or Hellenistic Jewish texts—with stories that connected emotions with miraculous deeds. Furthermore, many first-century hearers of Mark's story likely would have been accustomed to the notion that God (or

1 See Tacitus, *Histories* 4.81 and the discussion in chapter 2.

2 See Josephus's treatment of Elisha in the story of the multiplied oil in *Antiquities* 9.47–50; Philo's allusion in *On the Life of Moses* 1.101–125 to Moses's pity at the ending of the plague of darkness in Egypt; Philo's version of the Korah incident in *Moses* 2.279–283, in which Moses's anger directly precipitates the punitive miracle; and Sirach's discussion of Phinehas, whose zeal brings about the end of a plague (Sir 45:23–24). For more on these individual stories, see their treatment in chapter 3.

the gods) were apt to show pity or mercy toward those whom the god favors. First-century hearers of Mark's story were also likely aware from their experiences that extending pity or mercy was generally the prerogative of those who were not involved in the suffering itself and who had the capacity to offer assistance. The language of ἐλεέω/ἔλεος and cognates was well-suited to express these dynamics. Finally, first-century hearers of Mark may not have had much if any basis for thinking about a human miracle worker expressing emotion in an encounter with someone in need. The overwhelming majority of stories analyzed in chapters 2 and 3 involved a divine miracle worker expressing emotion.

Our examination of terms formed from the root σπλαγχν- (see chapter 4) revealed that, in the term σπλάγγον and cognates, Hellenistic Jewish writers seem to have found a novel way of describing an emotional response to suffering, using a root that in Greco-Roman literature at large was employed almost exclusively with physical connotations. This adaptation included the introduction of the verb form σπλαγγίζομαι, which aside from its initial appearance in 2 Maccabees 6:8, where it refers to the partaking of an animal sacrifice, carries a metaphorical connotation. While the emotional response to others' pain conveyed in σπλαγχν- terms has some overlap with other terms for pity or compassion (ἔλεος and οἶκτος), these terms also present something distinct. The physical component inherent in the root σπλαγχν- seems to allow for a deeper, more somatic-emotional response than the other terms, a response that does not seem to necessitate a power differential between the sufferer and the one who encounters the sufferer. Σπλαγχν- terms, thus, by virtue of their physicality, may be more conducive to having a human subject in miracle stories, though there are no such examples in the extant literature prior to the Gospel of Mark.

These analyses bring us to the central questions of the present work: What does the use of σπλαγγίζομαι contribute to Mark's characterization of the miracle worker Jesus? How might this term, used in the extant literature of no other miracle worker prior to Jesus, shed light on Jesus's miracles in Mark? And how might Mark's audience view this emotion in relation to Mark's overall objectives?

To anticipate our conclusions, the analysis of relevant passages through a narrative-critical lens will demonstrate that Mark's use of σπλαγγίζομαι is indeed exceptional, a means of portraying Jesus the miracle worker in line with Mark's overall characterization of Jesus. Specifically, Jesus is one who serves others not only in his sacrificial death but also in his life, demonstrating for his followers—which includes Mark's audience (and his followers today)—the kingdom virtue of compassionate service of others, springing from a deep

emotional response to human need. Put another way, the others-oriented service that Jesus encourages among his followers at various points in the Markan narrative is exemplified through these accounts in which the stirring of his compassion results in provision, healing, and renewal as part of his mission to bring God's kingdom into a world filled with suffering.

1 The Emotions of Jesus in Mark

The portrayal of Jesus's emotions has often been overlooked in Markan scholarship.³ This is surprising in that descriptions of Jesus's emotions appear frequently in the Gospel. Mark contains sixteen references to Jesus's emotions (see Table 1).⁴ Others arrive at different totals, based on differences in defining what constitutes an emotion.⁵

As Table 1 indicates, nine of the sixteen emotion terms in Mark occur in the context of a miracle story. We might also add the occurrence of θαυμάζω at 6:6, which portrays Jesus's amazement at the unbelief of the people of Nazareth immediately following the statement that Jesus was unable to perform many miracles there. And we might also include the "deep sigh" (ἀναστενάζω) of 8:12, attributed to Jesus when the religious leaders ask Jesus for a sign. If we include these two instances of emotion, then all but two of the depictions of Jesus's emotions outside of the passion narrative (10:14, 21) come in the context of Jesus's miraculous activity. While not all the miracle stories in Mark contain emotion language, it is striking in terms of Jesus's characterization to note that

3 This point, applied more generally to the study of emotions in biblical scholarship, forms the initial observation of others who have undertaken work in this burgeoning field. See, e.g., Voorwinde, *Jesus' Emotions in the Gospels*, 2; Spencer, *Passions*, ix–x.

4 Voorwinde, *Jesus's Emotions in the Gospels*, 59, notes that "Mark captures a wider range of Jesus' emotions than any other Gospel." Per Voorwinde's count, Mark contains fourteen different emotional expressions. And while the Gospel of John contains more total references to Jesus's emotions (twenty-eight), only nine different terms are used.

5 E.g., Kelly Lynn Anderson, in her dissertation titled "The Emotions of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark" (available from ProQuest LLC [27960499], PhD dissertation, Catholic University of America, 2020), lists twenty-two emotions in Mark (plus the cry of dereliction), with the main difference being her inclusion of the term θέλω ("to wish," "to will," or "to desire"). My count mirrors that of Stephen Voorwinde (*Jesus's Emotions in the Gospels*, 10–11, 59), with the exception that I have added the appearance of ἐλέεω in Mark 10:47 (the healing of blind Bartimaeus) and omitted Jesus's cry of dereliction, which is certainly emotionally charged but does not include a specific term of emotion. The term ἐλέεω, which featured prominently in earlier chapters of the present work, was included in Aristotle's lists of πάθη, unlike many of the other terms Voorwinde includes, and thus seems fit to include here.

TABLE 1 Emotions of Jesus in Mark

Reference	Greek term	Translation	Miracle story?
1:41	ὀργίζω/σπλαγχνίζομαι	be angry/have compassion	Y
1:43	ἐμβριμάομαι	sternly warn	Y
3:5	ὀργή	anger	Y
3:5	συλλυπέω	be distressed	Y
6:6	θαυμάζω	be amazed	
6:34	σπλαγχνίζομαι	have compassion	Y
7:34	στενάζω	sigh deeply	Y
8:2	σπλαγχνίζομαι	have compassion	Y
8:12	ἀναστενάζω	sigh deeply	
9:22	σπλαγχνίζομαι	have compassion	Y
10:14	ἀγανακτέω	be indignant	
10:21	ἀγαπάω	love	
10:47	ἐλεέω	pity	Y
14:33	ἐκθαμβέω	be deeply distressed	
14:33	ἀδημονέω	be troubled	
14:34	περίλυπος	overwhelming sorrow	

Jesus's emotions are often on display in his encounters with human suffering. We will return to this point at the conclusion of the chapter.

2 A Role for Emotions in the Characterization of Jesus in Mark

Even scholars who have focused upon the characterization of Jesus in Mark have largely neglected the emotions of Jesus in the Gospel. For example, Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, in *Mark as Story*, generally regarded as the foremost introduction to narrative criticism and the Gospel of Mark, indicate that one aspect to consider when analyzing characters is to discern what “drives and motivates the characters,” including “what their traits are.”⁶ Yet, they offer no discussion of Jesus's emotions as depicted by Mark.⁷ Likewise, in what is

6 Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story*, 100.

7 In discussing the function of Jesus's deeds of power, the comment is made: “His works are the expression of his compassion to bring the wholeness of the rule of God to those who are ‘like sheep without a shepherd.’” (Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story*, 108–9). This comment is not unpacked, however, nor is Jesus's compassion (or any other emotion) described as a trait that contributes meaningfully to the characterization of Jesus in Mark.

arguably the most notable narrative-critical work on the characterization of Jesus in Mark to date, Elizabeth Struthers Malbon's book *Mark's Jesus*, the emotional portrayal of Jesus is scarcely mentioned, encompassing little more than a paragraph in the 258-page work. In a section on what the narrator of Mark's Gospel says about Jesus, Malbon refers to the "inside views" of Jesus provided by the narrator, which include, among other things, descriptions of Jesus's emotions. After listing examples of Jesus's emotional portrayal, Malbon concludes her brief discussion of the topic thus: "Pity, compassion, anger, grief, amazement, discouragement, indignation—these are powerful human emotions, and the Markan narrator, who is certainly not effusive, makes a point to attribute them to the Markan Jesus directly and explicitly with inside views."⁸ The discussion does not go beyond mere observation, however, and this emotional portrayal does not factor into Malbon's overall depiction of Jesus's characterization in Mark. The lengthy narrative-critical works on Jesus's identity in Mark by Ole Davidsen and Jacob Naluparayil display a similar inattention to the role of Jesus's emotions in the story.⁹

But if the emotions of Jesus feature so prominently in Mark, as has been indicated, then should we not expect those emotions to contribute to the portrayal of Jesus that Mark offers his audience? As demonstrated in Greco-Roman and Jewish literature, miracle stories could readily be told void of any reference to the miracle worker's emotions. Yet in his account of Jesus's miracles, Mark has frequently chosen to give his audience an inside view to the emotions of the miracle worker. Narrative critics are apt to point to the intentionality of Mark, that he was doing more than simply rehashing the material he encountered in his sources. And scholarship in recent decades has displayed a growing appreciation for the author of Mark as a creative, clever storyteller.¹⁰ To what end, then, might the emotions of Jesus depicted in the miracle stories of Mark serve the author's purposes? Before we can answer this question, we must get a sense of Mark's overall narrative and how the miracle stories fit within that narrative.

⁸ Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 66–68, quote on p. 68.

⁹ Davidsen, *Narrative Jesus*; Naluparayil, *Identity of Jesus*. Both these works, though voluminous, also give very little attention to the miracles of Jesus, so the neglect of Jesus's emotions, which are prevalent in the miracle stories, is perhaps less surprising.

¹⁰ See, for example, Whitney Shiner, *Proclaiming the Gospel: First-Century Performance of Mark* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003), 4: "Judging from the way Mark's Gospel is composed, he is a gifted storyteller"; see also Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 57 n54.

3 Mark's Narrative and the Miracle Stories

3.1 *The Gospel's Opening*

The author opens the Gospel with a decisive statement about its central character, Jesus, setting the tone for the entire narrative by declaring that it is “the beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, Son of God.”¹¹ While the precise identity of Jesus is an ongoing question for the characters in Mark's Gospel, the author immediately informs the audience. Put another way, while the characters in the story are asking throughout “Who is this?” (see Mark 4:41), the audience has already been supplied the answer in the opening line or scene of the Gospel.¹² What the audience is left to discover, then, is *what it means* for Jesus

11 The phrase “Son of God” in Mark 1:1 constitutes a well-known textual variant. We will not spend time here rehashing the lengthy discussions on the issue. For a thorough treatment of the issue, see Tommy Wasserman, “The ‘Son of God’ Was in the Beginning (Mark 1:1),” *JTS* 62.1 (2011): 20–50, and bibliography there. On a related note, much ink has been spilled (and keys have been struck, to contemporize the metaphor) on the theme of Christological titles in Mark. For many, the linchpin for understanding Mark's Jesus is found in identifying the proper title for Jesus—that Mark is intentionally downplaying certain titles for Jesus (e.g., Son of God) in favor of the “correct” attribution (e.g., Son of Man). This approach has often been called into question. E.g., Joel F. Williams, “The Characterization of Jesus as Lord in Mark's Gospel,” in *Character Studies and the Gospel of Mark*, ed. Christopher W. Skinner and Matthew Ryan Hauge (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 107, states, “Studies on Mark's Christology have typically focused on the use of titles for Jesus, often for the purpose of discerning which title is the most important.” Williams draws the conclusion: “The hierarchy of titles approach to Mark's Christology ... diminishes the importance of the overall narrative for understanding the identity of Jesus. ... Mark does answer the question of who Jesus is, but he does so with a whole narrative, a complex and multi-faceted narrative that includes titles for Jesus but also much more.” (Williams, “Jesus as Lord,” 109–110). Similarly, M. Eugene Boring, “The Christology of Mark: Hermeneutical Issues for Systematic Theology,” *Semeia* 30 (1984): 133, argues, “While Mark does not do christology without considerable attention to titles, neither does he make finding the appropriate title for Jesus the primary method of Christology, precisely because pronouncing the correct title can still be a profound misunderstanding (8:27–31).” See also Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 3. In a sense, each of the titles are seen to be correct, though often in ironic or unforeseen ways.

12 See Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 40. Beyond simply the opening line, the citation of Scripture (1:2–3), the affirmation of John the Baptist (1:7–8), and the voice of God (1:11) further establish at the outset for the audience the authority and identity of Jesus—and that the character Jesus is a trustworthy figure; see Jeannine K. Brown, *The Gospels as Stories: A Narrative Approach to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 74. See also Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story*, 104: “By the time Jesus first speaks to announce that the rule of God has arrived, the audience is prepared to trust whatever he says and does.”

to be the Messiah, the Son of God.¹³ The other element the audience is left to discover is *how to respond* to what they learn about this Jesus, a question that is highlighted throughout the narrative through the varied responses of the characters and that is left open in a climactic way by the seemingly incomplete ending of the Gospel.¹⁴

3.2 *The Arrival of God's Kingdom*

Among narrative critics, the miracles of Jesus in Mark are typically seen as a dramatic, tangible display of the arrival of the kingdom of God that Jesus announced in Mark 1:15.¹⁵ In other words, Jesus, as agent of the kingdom of God, performs miracles. Indeed, in the narrative, this announcement by Jesus is followed in rapid succession by Jesus's call to the first disciples and then a series of miracle stories that span 1:21–2:12, in which people are released from the control of unclean spirits (1:21–28, 34) and from various illnesses

13 See Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 45: "What follows [after 1:1–13], down to 15:47, tells *how Jesus* is all that has been claimed for him by God and the omniscient narrator in 1:1–13" (emphasis original).

14 I follow the majority scholarly opinion that the Gospel originally ended at 16:8. While Mark's ending may come across as deficient for many modern readers—and apparently for some ancient readers, too, based on the relatively early additional "endings"—it does provide a powerful call to response: How would those hearing the story respond to Jesus as characterized by Mark? Speaking not just of the Gospel's ending but of Markan narrative Christology in general, Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 216, points out that the unresolved questions of the Markan narrative "tease the implied audience into active thought and thoughtful action." See also Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 16, 339–54, who offers a compelling case for the intentionality of the ending at 16:8.

15 See, for example, Tannehill, "Narrative Christology," 64: "This scene [Mark 1:14–15] relates the whole mission of Jesus to the coming of God's kingdom"; Kelber, *Mark's Story*, 20–21: "This pivotal message of the Kingdom's arrival announces the life program of the Markan Jesus. He is the proclaimer and bringer of the Kingdom; all aspects of his life and death are related to this mission of the Kingdom. ... [Jesus's] healing mission constitutes an essential part of his message of the arrival of the Kingdom"; Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story*, 106: "Everything he does and says stems from a conviction that 'the rule of God has arrived'"; see also Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story*, 73–74; Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 131, 155. A notable exception among narrative critics regarding the primary role of miracles in Mark's narrative is Edwin K. Broadhead, who contends that the miracles serve to bolster the authority of Jesus's teaching: "[Jesus's] deeds provide vivid confirmation of Jesus' identity: he is the mighty teacher/preacher endowed with the power of God. ... The central focus of this portrait [the miraculous activity of Jesus] is the teaching ministry of Jesus. ... [The miracles] provide graphic demonstrations of the authority and power present in Jesus' teaching" (*Teaching with Authority*, 208–9). In my view, Broadhead, much like the advocates of the "corrective Christology" approach to Mark's Gospel, too readily diminishes the role of the miracle stories and how they contribute in their own right to the characterization of Jesus in Mark.

(1:29–34, 40–45; 2:1–12).¹⁶ Whatever else this kingdom's arrival may entail, at first glance it involves following Jesus and relief from suffering (along with proclamation; 1:35–39).

3.3 *Conflict*

As the story unfolds, this relief from suffering through the miraculous activity of Jesus remains prominent, even as the plot of conflict (or rather conflicts) develops.¹⁷ A crucial aspect of the conflicts that unfold in Mark's story is the misunderstanding of who Jesus is and what he has come to do.¹⁸ The religious leaders as a character group are typically described negatively in their misunderstood view of Jesus (exceptions to this negative portrayal include the scribe of 12:28–34 and Joseph of Arimathea in 15:43–46). Even those closest to Jesus, especially his disciples but also his family, frequently misunderstand Jesus.¹⁹ All the while, numerous minor characters come to Jesus and find relief for their suffering.²⁰

3.4 *Understanding the Kingdom and Its Agent*

At the so-called turning point of the narrative (8:27–30), Jesus asks his disciples to answer the question the author has already answered for the audience in 1:1: Who is Jesus?²¹ The disciples had seen numerous miracles, heard Jesus's

16 Regarding the miracles recorded early in Mark's Gospel, Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 46, states, "The reader comes away from these first pages of the Gospel with the impression that Jesus's proclamation in v. 15 is bearing fruit."

17 A relationship between Jesus's miracles and conflict can be discerned early in the story. The first reported opposition to Jesus by the religious leaders occurs amid a miracle story (Mark 2:1–12), and the first reference to the plotting of Jesus's death is linked with the performance of a miracle (Mark 3:1–6). For the central role of conflict in the plot of Mark, see Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story*, 77–97. Malbon identifies three primary conflicts in the Markan narrative: a "background" conflict between God and Satan, a "middle ground" conflict between Jesus and the authorities, and a "foreground" conflict between Jesus and the disciples (*Mark's Jesus*, 48).

18 Malbon, the most prolific writer on Markan characters, wrote, "Central to all Markan characters is their response to Jesus" ("Characters in Mark's Story," 61); see also Williams, "Jesus as Lord," 119; Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 18.

19 On Jesus's family, see 3:21, 31–34; on the disciples, see 6:51–52; 8:14–21; 9:30–34; 10:35–40.

20 See, e.g., 1:32–34, 40–42; 2:1–12; 3:7–10; 5:21–43; 6:53–56; 7:24–37; 8:22–25; 9:17–27.

21 The centrality and significance of this passage is well documented. For example, Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 58, comments, "It is generally agreed that the story of Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi marks a watershed in the Gospel." See Gregg S. Morrison, *The Turning Point in the Gospel of Mark: A Study in Markan Christology* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014).

proclamation of the kingdom of God, and witnessed others respond to Jesus in various ways. The audience has been made aware at various points of the disciples' misunderstanding. In response to Jesus's question, the disciples first relay the varied responses of the people, all of which the audience understands conceptually to be incorrect. Peter then answers the question for himself, giving the answer the audience knows to be accurate. And yet, what follows demonstrates that Peter's understanding of "Messiah" remains deficient, a strictly human perspective (Mark 8:31–33).²² Jesus had not come to fulfill the prevalent messianic expectations regarding the deliverance of Israel from foreign oppressors.²³ Rather, his objective was, shockingly, to undergo suffering and death at the hands of the powerful. As Malbon puts it: "The christological surprise of Mark's Gospel is that the powerful healer and teacher accepts his own persecution, suffering, and death at the hands of men as the will of God."²⁴ Following his individual rebuke of Peter, Jesus instructs those around him that what is involved in following him is a willingness to follow him in suffering, in self-sacrifice, in a denial of the power and status that might be afforded them (8:34–38). As Malbon puts it: "The one who is called 'Christ' and 'Son of God,' the one powerful in healing and teaching, is the very one who insists that he and his followers must serve those with the least power even at the risk of persecution by those with the most power."²⁵ Malbon goes on to say:

The Markan Jesus who proclaims and participates in the in-breaking of the rule of God, restoring health to the powerless ill and hungry, both within his own group and beyond it, insists on continuing to serve those

22 Norman R. Peterson, "Point of View' in Mark's Narrative," *Semeia* 12 (1978): 97–121, suggests that these two opposing perspectives, thinking the things of God or thinking the things of men, are wholly determinative in a character's response to Jesus. Malbon, picking up on the motif of blindness that frames this section of Mark's Gospel (8:22–10:52), describes Peter's response thus: "Peter is half-sighted, half-blind; he can see a Christ powerful in healing and teaching; he cannot see a serving and suffering Christ" (*Mark's Jesus*, 142).

23 Regarding Jewish messianic expectations, Malbon (*Mark's Jesus*, 115) states, "Although there was no unified Jewish expectation of a messiah (Christ) in first-century Judaism, suffering and death were not part of any of the various expectations."

24 Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 204. See also Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 96: "Mark is telling his readers that Jesus' true identity is improperly comprehended apart from his passion and death: the healer and exorcist without the suffering Jesus is a misunderstood Messiah"; Chris Keith, "The Markan Portrayal of Jesus' Identity," *Leaven* 19 no. 1 (2011): 22: "Readers see Jesus accept the title 'Christ' *only when he can define it in light of his messianic mission of death and resurrection*" (emphasis original).

25 Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 39.

with the least status in society and teach whoever wishes to do the will of God to do the same, even at the clear risk of losing his life at the hands of the established powers, and accepts that risk as the will of God.²⁶

Later in this central section of Mark's narrative, the other two disciples of Jesus's most intimate circle, James and John, mistake the kingdom brought by Jesus to be one of power and prestige as they request to have prominent positions alongside Jesus (Mark 10:35–37). Again Jesus's response is designed to reorient his followers to a true understanding of his messiahship and of the values of God's kingdom. In contrast to the model on display among the powerful—one that promotes power and oppression—the way of Jesus is marked by servanthood, which would be clearly on display in his giving of his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:42–45).²⁷ All the while, Jesus continues to perform miracles in response to human need, bringing relief to those who are suffering (9:14–29; 10:46–52).

3.5 *The Passion Week and the Kingdom*

As the narrative progresses to its end, the final week of Jesus's life, miracles drop out of the picture, with the exception of the withering of the fig tree (Mark 11:12–14, 20–25). This miracle story is one not of healing but of decay, placed in the narrative in order to illustrate the corruption and failure of a way of living symbolized within the Temple itself that was not producing fruit in service to others as a reflection of the kingdom of God (Mark 11:15–19). In the ongoing leadup to Jesus's death, the other major characters of the story—both the religious leaders and the disciples—continue to misunderstand Jesus, his others-oriented service, and the kingdom he is proclaiming.

In the end, Jesus's life of serving others leads to his death at the hands of the powerful (14:1–2, 43–65; 15:1–37).²⁸ And it is in the events surrounding his crucifixion that Jesus, for the first time in Mark's narrative, is (albeit ironically) proclaimed king (Mark 15:18, 26, 32; see also 15:2, 9, 12). As Moloney states, "For the Markan Christology it is *in the moment of suffering, insult, humiliation, and finally death* that Jesus is king."²⁹ Thus, in Mark's story, the one who

26 Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 42–43.

27 Commenting on Mark 10:45, Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 207, concludes: "Service becomes the most crucial character trait of the narrative." Or, as Kelber, *Mark's Story*, 86, puts it: "[Mark] defines discipleship unambiguously in terms of following the suffering Jesus." See also Kelber, *Mark's Story*, 94.

28 See Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 21.

29 Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 317 (emphasis original). See also Keith, "Markan Portrayal," 23, who puts it this way: "Mark narrates the story in such a way as to suggest that Jesus'

came proclaiming God's kingdom and relieving the suffering of others through his miraculous deeds is himself declared king in the experience of his own suffering—the culminating act of servanthood in a kingdom that stands in stark contrast to all other kingdoms.

This brief (by no means exhaustive) synopsis of Mark's story is not novel. The notions that Jesus's identity is fully understood only in his selfless death at the hands of the powerful and that he calls his followers to emulate his servanthood and self-sacrifice are well recognized.³⁰ What is often missed, however, in analyses of Mark's story is that Jesus's others-focused service runs throughout the narrative, and not simply in his teaching and actions related to the cross. It is not as though a powerful miracle-working figure suddenly yields to a suffering servant when he turns toward Jerusalem. In response to the sharp division often made between the two halves of Mark's Gospel, Broadhead states,

Narrative analysis of the role of miracle stories in the Gospel of Mark supports a crucial conclusion: the Gospel of Mark avoids the Christological dichotomy between the Jesus of the miracles and the Jesus of the cross. Instead, the narrative grammar constructs an integrated portrait: Jesus is the powerful proclaimer whose wondrous teachings lead to his death. ... No sharp division exists between the portrait of Jesus in the first and the last half of the Gospel. The narrative develops the failure of the disciples through both miracle stories and the passion account. The opposition of the religious leaders begins in a miracle story and is fulfilled in the passion narrative. ... Both miracle stories and the passion confirm the messiahship of Jesus.³¹

death (and subsequent resurrection) is precisely where his identity as the anointed Messiah-king is most revealed."

30 On the notion that Jesus's identity is fully understood only in relation to his death, see footnote 24 of the present chapter. On the Markan objective of promoting emulation, see, for example, Williams, "Jesus as Lord," 121, 125. For more on emulation in relation to Jesus's compassionate service, see the conclusion of the present chapter.

31 Broadhead, *Teaching with Authority*, 213–214. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 59, similarly underscores the importance of the first half of the Gospel for understanding who Jesus is, arguing that the miracles "are not subsidiary to the gospel but at least coincident with it." In response to the notion that Mark was downplaying the miraculous and warning his readers against belief in miracles, Twelftree states, "A more reasonable account of Mark's attitude is to say that he highly values the miracle traditions and sees Jesus' miracle-working power as inseparable from his self-giving weakness seen in the passion narrative" (*Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 93). Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 19, describes the first half of the Gospel as asking the question "Who is Jesus?" and the second half of the Gospel as responding "the suffering and vindicated Son of Man, the Christ and Son of God" but contends that "these two 'halves' of the plot overlap."

The stories of Jesus's miracles, recounted throughout the first half of the narrative, reveal not only that Jesus is the powerful agent of God's kingdom. They also reveal one who enters the pain and suffering of humanity, feels with and for them, and serves others in compassion and love. These themes are not simply relegated to the Passion narrative but are central to the entirety of Mark's story. An analysis of Jesus's compassion puts this on full display, as we will see in the examination of individual miracle stories that follows.

4 Jesus's Compassion in Individual Miracle Stories

4.1 *Mark 1:40–45: Healing of a Man with Leprosy*

Before examining the function of this passage in Mark's narrative and its contribution to Mark's characterization of Jesus, the textual issue at 1:41 (σπλαγχνισθεῖς v. ὀργισθεῖς) must be addressed. The external evidence overwhelmingly favors σπλαγχνισθεῖς; only a few manuscripts contain ὀργισθεῖς (D a ff² r^{1*}). Yet, many scholars contend that ὀργισθεῖς is more likely to be original.³² The primary argument for this on internal grounds is that ὀργισθεῖς is the *lectio difficilior*: It would have been unlikely for a scribe to see σπλαγχνισθεῖς and alter it to ὀργισθεῖς.³³ It has also been pointed out in favor of reading ὀργισθεῖς as original that in the parallel accounts of this story in Matthew and Luke, σπλαγχνίζομαι does not appear. The argument is that Matthew and Luke likely would have retained σπλαγχνίζομαι, whereas it is understandable why they would have removed ὀργίζω in their accounts of this story.³⁴ The chief difficulty aside

32 See, e.g., William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 84; Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 62; France, *Gospel of Mark*, 115; Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 58; M. Eugene Boring, *Mark: A Commentary*, The New Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 70; Spencer, *Passions*, 48.

33 Hence, Spencer, *Passions*, 48, states, "While we can easily imagine a scribe altering a received copy of Mark that reported Jesus's enraged (and outrageous) bedside manner toward the leper, it's hard to conceive of the reverse operation, changing 'compassion' to 'anger.' No reasonable Christian scribe would bat an eye at Jesus's compassionate motivation."

34 See, e.g., France, *Gospel of Mark*, 115. Similarly, a version of the story found in Papyrus Egerton 2 does not contain σπλαγχνισθεῖς (it does not have ὀργισθεῖς either, however); for a discussion of this text, see Lane, *Gospel of Mark*, 86. The argument that Matthew and Luke likely would have retained σπλαγχνίζομαι is weakened by the fact that neither Matthew nor Luke has σπλαγχνίζομαι in their accounts of the healing of the boy with an unclean spirit in parallel with Mark 9:14–29, and Luke does not include σπλαγχνίζομαι in his account of the feeding of the five thousand (cf. Matt 14:14; 15:32).

from manuscript attestation encountered by those who favor the reading ὀργισθεῖς comes in offering a viable explanation for how the word fits within the narrative context. Why would Jesus be angry in the middle of an encounter with someone whom he willingly heals?³⁵ Various explanations regarding the object of Jesus's anger have been proposed: The anger was directed at the man with leprosy himself (perhaps because of his unlawful approach to Jesus³⁶ or because Jesus was offended by the man's question of his willingness),³⁷ the societal treatment of those with leprosy,³⁸ or simply the existence of disease and death within God's creation.³⁹

The reading σπλαγχνισθεῖς also has numerous proponents, however.⁴⁰ Aside from the large number of manuscripts containing σπλαγχνισθεῖς, the term

35 So Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 106: "I must admit that if 'being angry' is the correct reading, we simply do not possess a clear understanding of why Jesus was angry or how Mark understood it. On the other hand, 'moved with compassion' has far better textual support and describes Jesus in 6:34 and 8:2 (cf. also 9:22)."

36 See, e.g., William Loader, "Challenged at the Boundaries: A Conservative Jesus in Mark's Tradition," *JSNT* 63 (1996): 56; Mary Ann Beavis, *Mark*, ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑ (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 55–56.

37 See F. Scott Spencer, "Why Did the 'Leper' Get under Jesus' Skin? Emotion Theory and Angry Reaction in Mark 1:40–45," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 36 (2014): 107–128.

38 E.g., Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 58.

39 E.g., Lane, *Gospel of Mark*, 86; Joachim Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 4th ed., 2 vols. Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Zurich: Benziger Verlag, 1978–79), 92–93; Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 27 (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 209; Boring, *Mark*, 71. Another interesting proposal is that this account has its origins in a miracle story concerning Jesus's angry encounter with the spirit of leprosy (Dennis Eric Nineham, *Saint Mark*, Pelican New Testament Commentaries [Hamondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963], 87; cited by Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 58); for a discussion of this cure of leprosy as a potential confrontation with demonic evil without recourse to an earlier miracle tradition, see Boring, *Mark*, 71. Another intriguing idea in relation to Mark's potential source material is posited by Mary Ann Beavis (*Mark*, 56–57), who speculates that the anger of Jesus in this story in Mark may serve as an echo of the angry tone of the story of Elisha's healing of Naaman (2 Kgs 5:1–19). It should be noted, however, that the anger in the Elisha story is not a trait of the miracle worker Elisha but rather of the Israelite king (2 Kgs 5:7) and of Naaman himself (2 Kgs 5:11–12).

40 E.g., Stein, *Mark*, 106; Cotter, *Christ of the Miracle Stories*, 38; Voorwinde, *Jesus' Emotions in the Gospels*, 70. Collins, *Mark*, 177, avoids taking a direct position on the issue, but she employs "pity" in her translation of 1:41 (suggesting a preference for σπλαγχνισθεῖς). The reading σπλαγχνισθεῖς has been deemed the preferred reading for the authoritative Greek New Testament text (*Novum Testamentum Graece*, now in its 28th edition; the UBS *Greek New Testament*, now in its 5th edition); see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 65.

seems to fit readily the context of the story. A petitioner comes begging and kneeling before Jesus, expressing faith that Jesus could heal him if he so desired. Jesus touches the man with leprosy (!), conveys that he is willing, and proclaims the man's cleansing, upon which the man is healed. This certainly seems like a compassionate act on the part of Jesus.⁴¹ The difficulty in accepting this reading comes, as already indicated, from the scarcely imaginable change from *σπλαγχνισθεῖς* to *ὀργισθεῖς* that would have occurred in the aforementioned manuscripts.⁴² The argument that is often cited in response to this point is that scribes took up the idea of anger (*ὀργισθεῖς*) from the use of *ἐμβριμησάμενος* ("sternly warning") in 1:43.⁴³

My inclination tilts slightly in favor of the reading *ὀργισθεῖς*, in accordance with the *lectio difficilior* argument. However, for the sake of thoroughness, in what follows, I will provide an analysis of the passage that includes the reading *σπλαγχνισθεῖς*.⁴⁴ As the term *σπλαγχνίζομαι* occurs indisputably in three other miracle stories in Mark, the conclusions of the present study do not hang on

41 It is interesting to note that it is not uncommon for those who favor the reading *ὀργισθεῖς* to still refer to the miracle as an act of compassion; see, e.g., Lane, *Gospel of Mark*, 87; France, *Gospel of Mark*, 117–118, who in reflecting on the potential reason for Jesus's anger in the story, states, "[The fact] that the anger was not directed against the man himself is implied by the immediate compassionate response."

42 Cotter, *Christ of the Miracle Stories*, 38, speculates that the copyist of Codex Bezae incorrectly concluded (from the angry tone of 1:43–44) that an earlier copyist had piously replaced *ὀργισθεῖς* with *σπλαγχνισθεῖς* and thus is responsible for introducing the reading *ὀργισθεῖς*.

43 Collins, *Mark*, 177. See Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 65, who also includes the possibility that the reading *ὀργισθεῖς* arose from a confusion between similar Aramaic words, citing the Syriac terms *ethraḥam*, "he had pity," and *ethra'em*, "he was enraged." A recent study by Joel E. Lisboa and Thomas R. Shepherd ("Comparative Narrative Analysis as a Tool in Determining the *Lectio Difficilior* in Mark 1:40–45: A Narrative Analysis of Codices Bezae, Vaticanus, and Washingtonianus," *Neotestamentica* 49.1 [2015]: 75–89) takes an alternative approach. Using quantitative narrative analysis comparing Codices B, D, and W, Lisboa and Shepherd conclude that B (Vaticanus), which has *σπλαγχνίζομαι* in v. 41 and *ἐμβριμάομαι* in v. 43—a mixed portrayal of Jesus's emotions—actually contains the *lectio difficilior*. Their argument is that, in the overall narrative context, the portrayal of Jesus either as only angry in the story (the combination of *ὀργίζω* and *ἐμβριμάομαι* as in D) or as only compassionate (as in W, which has *σπλαγχνίζομαι* in v. 41 and omits v. 43) would provide a smoother reading; hence, the odd combination of *σπλαγχνίζομαι* and *ἐμβριμάομαι* is more likely to be original. This attempt to extend the discussion beyond simply comparing the two terms *σπλαγχνίζομαι* and *ὀργίζω*—i.e., a narrative approach—is intriguing, but their argument does not seem to have gained much traction in the scholarly world.

44 I do so with the understanding that an equally valid analysis could be conducted based on the reading *ὀργισθεῖς*.

this single passage. And whether σπλαγχνίζομαι was the original reading in 1:41, the widespread appearance of the term in the textual tradition suggests an early adaptation by many readers/hearers of the Gospel of Mark.

This story of healing is one of a series of miracles attributed to Jesus in 1:21–2:12. The author had begun the account in 1:1 by indicating that the entire narrative concerned the good news of Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God. Jesus, whose arrival on the scene was said to be the fulfillment of prophecy (1:2–3) and whose mission had been launched by the Spirit (1:9–13), began to proclaim the good news and the arrival of the kingdom of God (1:14–15). The immediate result of this announcement of the kingdom's arrival is the gathering of an initial following and the powerful teaching and miracle-working ministry of Jesus. Through the rapid presentation of Jesus's miraculous deeds, Mark indicates that healing and restoration were crucial components of the in-breaking of God's kingdom through Jesus.⁴⁵ Kelly Lynn Anderson remarks, "The primary thrust of 1:21–45 is to undergird and demonstrate the claims about Jesus in the prologue (1:1–13). By presenting Jesus as driving out demons, healing illnesses, and teaching with authority, the Evangelist ... illustrates the in-breaking power of God over the reign of Satan."⁴⁶ By the time we get to the story of the healing of the man with leprosy (1:40–45), Jesus has already "healed many having illness with various diseases and cast out many demons" (1:34), including a couple of highlighted individuals: a man with an unclean spirit (1:21–28) and Peter's mother-in-law (1:29–31).

The present story begins with an approaching suppliant, who is described as a λεπρός (1:40). However we might understand the particular skin disease of this man,⁴⁷ we can envision a person who, in first-century Jewish society,

45 See Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 155; Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 46; see also Ira Brent Driggers, "God as Healer of Creation in the Gospel of Mark," in *Characters Studies and the Gospel of Mark*, ed. Christopher W. Skinner and Matthew Ryan Hauge (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 89: "For Mark, the 'reign of God' (βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ) is a key category—perhaps the key category—for describing how the one Creator acts in the ministry of Jesus for the healing of creation."

46 Anderson, *Emotions of Jesus*, 56–57; see also Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 62, who states that, in Mark, Jesus is "reestablishing God's original creative order by establishing the reigning presence of God."

47 For a treatment of the often discussed relationship of this term to modern notions of Hansen's disease and other skin diseases, see Cotter, *Christ of the Miracle Stories*, 23–30; see also Voorwinde, *Jesus's Emotions in the Gospels*, 68–69. For a recent treatment of the issue, see Matthew Thiessen, *Jesus and the Forces of Death: The Gospels' Portrayal of Ritual Impurity within First-Century Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020). Thiessen challenges both the frequently made connection of the man's condition with modern

was likely a social outcast desperate for the opportunity to reenter community with some degree of normalcy.⁴⁸ His posture and his proximity to Jesus demonstrate his desperation, and his request (“If you are willing, you are able to cleanse me”; Ἐὰν θέλῃς δύνασαί με καθαρίσαι, 1:40) demonstrates faith in Jesus’s ability to heal⁴⁹—a faith presumably stemming from the growing awareness of Jesus’s healing ability (1:32–34).

The question for the suppliant is not Jesus’s ability; it is his desire. By this point in the narrative, Mark’s audience is also likely to presume Jesus’s ability to heal this man, especially since Jesus had successfully cast away uncleanness (an “unclean spirit”; πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ) in the first miracle story of the narrative (1:21–28). But the question of Jesus’s willingness moves the issue to one of motivation. Fittingly, then, the description of Jesus’s response begins with an allusion to his emotional reaction and is only then followed by the account of his healing action and verbal response (1:41). An audience hearing σπλαγχνισθεῖς here would picture a strong, visceral response on the part of Jesus, reflecting a deep sense of compassion for a man whose condition likely would have precipitated deep suffering. If, as suggested in the prior chapter, this term conveys a sense of empathy, or “feeling with” the pain of another, then Jesus’s action of stretching out his hand and touching the man—a man with a skin disease!⁵⁰—mirrors in a tangible, physical sense, an internal identification with the man’s experience of suffering. This touch also conveys a preference for meeting a human need over maintaining ritual correctness or social custom,⁵¹ a tendency demonstrated by Jesus that would put him at odds

Hansen’s disease and the notion that Jesus opposed Jewish laws of ritual purity. See also Louise J. Lawrence, *Sense and Stigma in the Gospels: Depictions of Sensory-Disabled Characters*, Biblical Refigurations (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), who casts many of the ailments of the miracle stories of Jesus in terms of sensory disability. In discussing this story (Mark 1:40–45), Lawrence emphasizes the foul odor that accompanies such skin diseases (Lawrence, *Sense and Stigma*, 87–90).

48 For a review of the prescriptions in Leviticus 13–14 for those with serious skin diseases, see Voorwinde, *Jesus’s Emotions in the Gospels*, 69–70.

49 See Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 61–62. For an argument that the leper’s posture before Jesus may have been an act of subversion, an attempt to coerce a publicly favorable response from Jesus, see Lawrence, *Sense and Stigma*, 89.

50 Note that Jesus had also touched Simon’s mother-in-law in 1:31. This touch, like that of 1:31, “cuts through taboos arising from criteria ‘outside’ the person”—a theme that will take center stage in Mark 7:1–23 (Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 58).

51 France, *Gospel of Mark*, 115–116, 118: “Here need takes precedence over convention (even when firmly based in the OT)” (quotation is from p. 118). It should be noted that “convention” is not entirely set aside in this healing story, however, as Jesus’s commands for the healed man to follow the prescriptions of Leviticus 13–14 show. Hence, Boring, *Mark*, 72, states, “This [the man’s going to the priest] is to be done ‘as a testimony to them,’ which

with the religious authorities (see Mark 2:13–3:6; 7:1–23). After the emotional and physical response comes the verbal response, “I am willing, be cleansed” (Θέλω, καθαρίσθητι, 1:41), and the immediate departure (ἀπέρχομαι, 1:42) of the disease.

The inclusion of Jesus’s emotion—the first such instance in Mark—gives significance to the encounter itself and not simply to the performance of the miracle.⁵² The author had a reason for including this depiction of Jesus’s emotional state. In the face of raw human suffering, the Markan Jesus is affected.⁵³ Could it be that part of what it meant for Jesus to usher in the kingdom of God was not simply that he would experience suffering for others on the cross but that he would also enter the suffering of others throughout his ministry, bringing healing and restoration and demonstrating an others-focused servanthood that encompasses the whole person, emotions included? We will return to this at the conclusion of the chapter.

The story continues with an undisputed expression of Jesus’s anger (ἐμβριμάομαι) as he sends the man away with the charge not to say anything to anyone and to show himself to the priest (1:43–44). As with the reading ὀργίζω in verse 41, the appearance in verse 43 of an angry response by Jesus has puzzled commentators. The term ἐμβριμάομαι connotes something along the lines of an angry grunt.⁵⁴ The basic meaning of the word is “to snort angrily.”⁵⁵ Whereas the object of Jesus’s potential anger in verse 41 is unclear, the syntax of verse 43 suggests that this angry response is indeed directed toward the healed man. Various theories have been proposed for explaining this angry response, though again, consensus is elusive.⁵⁶ Within the narrative context of Mark’s

probably means not only official evidence to the priests and the public at large that he has been cleansed, but testimony to Jesus’ and his followers’ respect for the law.”

52 See Wendy Cotter’s book *Christ of the Miracle Stories: Portrait through Encounter*, which focuses upon this notion that the encounters themselves were significant to Mark’s story.

53 The same statement could be made in relation to the reading ὀργίζω here if one views such anger as being directed toward the evil of suffering, disease, and death.

54 BDAG, “ἐμβριμάομαι,” 322.

55 Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 58; Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:700. France, *Gospel of Mark*, 118, points to the definition given by Campbell Bonner, “Traces of Thaumaturgic Technique in the Miracles,” *HTR* 20 (1927): 174: “scarce-controlled animal fury.” Voorwinde, *Jesus’s Emotions in the Gospels*, 72, suggests that it may be appropriate to conclude that Jesus “roared” at the man.

56 Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 58–59, suggests that Jesus’s expressions of anger in this passage (reading ὀργίζω in v. 41) are fitting in the context of an encounter with “the powers of evil” and demonstrate “his passionate commitment to the wholeness and holiness of those who are called to enter the kingdom of God.” For Lane, the most plausible explanation for the use of ἐμβριμάομαι here is that Jesus foresaw the man’s disobedience to his command to silence (*Gospel of Mark*, 87); see also France, *Gospel of Mark*, 118–119. This idea

Gospel, the force of Jesus's response here serves to introduce—somewhat dramatically—the idea that understanding Jesus's identity solely on the basis of his miraculous power and authoritative teaching is to miss the bigger picture.⁵⁷ The one who would ultimately serve humanity in his sacrificial death had served this individual suppliant, providing deliverance and restoration in the face of personal human need. Perhaps the disjunction of others-oriented service and the power and prestige gained from a growing reputation—a disjunction played up throughout Mark's Gospel—is the precipitating factor in Jesus's anger here. The ironic result of the broadcasting of these events was that the one who “was able” (δύνασαι, 1:40) to cleanse the man with leprosy is “no longer able” (μηκέτι αὐτὸν δύνασθαι, 1:45) to enter a city without being swarmed by a crowd.⁵⁸ If this reading is correct, then the compassion of Jesus would only further highlight that disjunction.

This emotionally charged story—the first instance of Jesus's emotional expression in Mark—presents Jesus as anything but disinterested or callous as a miracle worker. By including these emotional responses of compassion and/or anger, the author characterizes Jesus as affected by the suppliant and his situation. The presence of disease and suffering, the harsh reality of the

finds potential support in the story of the healing of two blind men in Matthew 9:27–31, in which ἐμβριμάσθαι is similarly used with Jesus as its subject, with similar results, as the blind men disobey the command and spread the news of Jesus. Voorwinde, *Jesus' Emotions in the Gospels*, 72–73, takes a similar approach but suggests that the disobedience likely extends beyond the command to silence to also include the man's disobedience to the commands to show himself to the priest and offer the required sacrifice. For Voorwinde, it is this disobedience to the Mosaic requirements that attracts the unwelcome attention of the religious leaders in the story that follows (Mark 21–12), which makes Jesus's anger all the more understandable. Only the disobedience to the command to silence is mentioned in the Gospel, however. While not making an explicit link between this story and the controversy which follows, Broadhead, *Teaching with Authority*, 74, concludes that Jesus, by virtue of his declaring the man with leprosy clean, fulfills the duty of the priest, and in the healing “Jesus' actions become a condemnation of the religious leaders.”

57 This Markan literary technique has often been referred to as “the messianic secret.” As Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 58 n55, points out, “very little ‘secrecy’ is generated by Jesus' commands to silence after miracles.” Rather, “Mark uses the technique to direct the reader to a correct understanding of Jesus, not to ‘hide’ his messianic status.” Moloney goes on to say, “The reader, informed in the prologue (1:1–13) of who Jesus is, must read through to the end of the Gospel to find out how he is the Messiah and the Son of God—as the crucified one. Commands to silence during the story will direct the reader toward that conclusion” (*Gospel of Mark*, 60).

58 As Voorwinde, *Jesus' Emotions in the Gospels*, 73–74, points out, there is an irony here in that Jesus, now confined to “lonely places,” has switched places with the man who had leprosy, who is now able to reenter normal society.

man's social status, and the disobedience of the man himself may all contribute in some way to Jesus's emotional responses. And while there is at least some measure of anger in the story (whether or not one reads ὀργίζω in v. 41), Jesus is willing to touch the man and cleanse him—a true act of compassion for a suffering individual.

4.2 *Mark 6:30–44: Feeding of the Five Thousand*

By the time Mark's audience encounters the first miraculous feeding story, a number of additional miracles attributed to Jesus have been recounted, including at least one of every type of miracle traditionally performed by Jesus: healings (2:1–12; 3:1–6; 5:24–34), a nature miracle (4:35–41), an exorcism (5:1–20), and a raising from death (5:21–23, 35–43). In Mark, the arrival of the kingdom of God continues to be demonstrated in the miraculous deeds of Jesus. The main teaching section in the first half of Mark's Gospel also concerns the arrival and growth of the kingdom (4:1–34). As Jesus travels throughout Galilee, with great crowds following, the mission of Jesus to announce the kingdom and deliver the good news (1:14–15) seems to proceed according to plan. And the miraculous deeds of the Markan Jesus indicate that this kingdom is marked by freedom, restoration, and wholeness.⁵⁹

Meanwhile, opposition has also been growing. Not everyone in the narrative responds positively to Jesus, even in the early portions of the story. Some of the religious leaders take issue with his others-oriented ministry insofar as it seems to counter the law and proper social practice (see 2:5–7, 15–17, 23–28; 3:1–6, 22–30), to the point that they begin to plot his death (3:6). Those from his hometown of Nazareth, along with his own family members, are unable to accept his words and actions (3:21, 31–35; 6:1–6). Indeed, the response to Jesus and his message is varied (see 4:1–20).

As the Markan narrative unfolds, it is the response of the disciples that increasingly takes center stage, as Jesus's closest followers try to answer the question "Who is this man?" (see 4:41). Jesus had begun to involve his disciples in the work of the kingdom, sending them out to proclaim a message of repentance and to perform miraculous deeds—in other words, doing the same activities Jesus had been doing (6:7–13).⁶⁰ And they had met with success (6:13, 30).

59 Or as Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 155, puts it, "Health and renewed life are marks of the rule of God proclaimed by the Markan Jesus."

60 As Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 212, points out, this involvement of Jesus's followers in his kingdom work is introduced earlier in the story at 4:10–11: "Whereas the first reference [to the kingdom of God, 1:14–15] establishes Jesus as the kingdom's proclaimer, the second [4:11] establishes his followers as its participants."

Now, upon the disciples' return, Jesus intends to get away privately with the disciples for a time of rest (6:31–32). That plan gets foiled, however, as a crowd of people “from all the towns” goes by foot and arrives at their destination first (6:33). In the ensuing events, the disciples would for the first time in Mark become active participants in a miracle performed by Jesus, as we will see.⁶¹

Meanwhile, between the account of Jesus's sending of the Twelve on their ministry tour and the account of their return to Jesus, Mark has placed the story of John the Baptist's death.⁶² The placement of this story here serves a purpose beyond simply allowing time in the narrative for the disciples to conduct their ministry. Herod's banquet, a lavish and lewd party with a high-class guest list, provides a stark contrast to the simple banquet Jesus would provide in a remote place to a hungry crowd. Or as Lane puts it, “[The feeding story's] position in the Marcan framework after the account of Herod's feast juxtaposes the sumptuous oriental aura of the Herodian court with the austere circumstances in which Jesus satisfied the multitude with the staples of a peasant's diet.”⁶³ Whereas the king of Galilee (6:14) served up the death of God's prophet at his banquet, an “obscene final course,”⁶⁴ Jesus supplied life-giving nourishment to the people in the wilderness.⁶⁵

61 Regarding the disciples' involvement in Jesus's ministry, Joel Marcus, “Identity and Ambiguity in Markan Christology,” in *Seeking the Identity of Jesus: A Pilgrimage*, ed. Beverly Roberts Gaventa and Richard B. Hays (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 134, states: “Various Markan passages, such as the call of the Twelve ‘to be with him’ (3:14a), their commissioning to exercise the power Jesus bestows upon them (3:14b–15; 6:7–13), and the stories of miraculous feeding (6:30–45; 8:1–10), highlight the disciples' presence and active participation in Jesus' ministry.”

62 This is one of the so-called Markan sandwich passages (or intercalations), a literary technique whereby Mark inserts one story into the middle of another story (other examples include 3:20–35; 5:21–43; 11:12–21; 14:1–11) with the result that Mark's audience interprets the bracketing story through the lens of the intercalated story. For more on this, see James R. Edwards, “Markan Sandwiches: The Significance of Interpolations in Markan Narratives,” *NovT* 31.3 (1989): 193–216; Tom Shepherd, *Markan Sandwich Stories: Narration, Definition, and Function* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1993). For a specific treatment of Mark 6:6b–30 as a Markan sandwich, see Francis J. Moloney, “Mark 6:6b–30: Mission, the Baptist, and Failure,” *CBQ* 63.4 (2001): 647–63.

63 Lane, *Gospel of Mark*, 227. See also France, *Gospel of Mark*, 260: “In contrast to the unedifying banquet in Antipas's palace, the story goes on with a very different meal; the food is basic, but the circumstances and the reminiscences of OT events in the narrative mark out this simple meal as of more ultimate significance than the tetrarch's lavish birthday party.”

64 Boring, *Mark*, 182.

65 See James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 189–90.

The feeding story's setting, "a desert place" (6:31), provides the first of several connections to the Exodus narrative.⁶⁶ Jesus's response at the missed opportunity for solitude is neither frustration nor disappointment. Rather, Mark depicts Jesus's response with the word ἐσπλαγχνίσθη, "he was moved with compassion" (6:34). As Spencer states, "Rather than putting the people off, even temporarily while he recuperates, his 'compassion' kicks in immediately. No deliberation or negotiation, just instinctual, gut-level compassion, as if Jesus could respond in no other way."⁶⁷ The reason for this compassionate response is given: "because they were like sheep having no shepherd" (6:34). This pastoral image of a leaderless people recalls Numbers 27:17, in which Moses requests that God would appoint a leader over the people to succeed him so that they would not be "as sheep to whom there is no shepherd."⁶⁸ The motif of shepherdless sheep also recalls 1 Kings 22:7 // 2 Chronicles 18:16, in which the prophet Micaiah envisions the leaderless state of the people following the predicted death of Ahab.⁶⁹ The preceding narrative in Mark's account had given a clear picture of the inadequate leadership of the people in the whimsical, self-ish Herod Antipas.⁷⁰ While Herod had killed a prophet beloved by many of the people in order to protect his reputation, Jesus steps out of the boat with care and concern for the people, the marks of a good shepherd.⁷¹

The shepherd imagery used here also recalls Ezekiel 34. In the prophet's message, the self-indulgent shepherds of Israel are castigated, and God promises both to shepherd the people himself (Ezek 34:11) and to send another Davidic shepherd (Ezek 34:23–24). Eugene Boring comments on the connection between the shepherd imagery of the Hebrew Bible and the expectations regarding a messianic king:

Mark's language of shepherding is resonant with overtones of the kingdom of God. ... Israelite and Judean kings were charged to represent God's rule among the people, but human kingship failed; God is the true king /

66 See Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 129.

67 Spencer, *Passions*, 191; see also Voorwinde, *Jesus's Emotions in the Gospels*, 86.

68 LXX: ὥστε πρόβατα, οἷς οὐκ ἔστιν ποιμήν. In the case of the events of Numbers, God's response to the potential shepherdlessness of his people—Joshua—is immediate (Num 27:18–23). Adela Yarbo Collins, *Mark*, 319, posits that the connection of Jesus's words with Moses's appeal for a shepherd may have also generated a mental association among Mark's audience with the promise that God would send a prophet like Moses (Deut 18:15–18).

69 See also Nah 3:18; Jdt 11:19.

70 See Lane, *Gospel of Mark*, 227: "In spite of the tetrarch's pretensions to royalty, the people are as leaderless as sheep who possess no shepherd."

71 See Anderson, *Emotions of Jesus*, 90.

shepherd of Israel (Gen 48:15; 49:24; Pss 23:1; 28:9; 80:1; Isa 40:11) and will replace defective and perverse human shepherds (Jer 23:1–4; Ezek 34) by establishing his own kingship in power, either by coming himself or by sending an eschatological king / shepherd (Isa 40:11; 49:9–10; Jer 31:10; Ezek 34:5, 8, 15, 23–24; Mi 5:1–4; Matt 2:6).⁷²

The primary evidence of proper shepherding throughout Ezekiel 34 is that the people are sufficiently fed (Ezek 34:2–3, 10, 13–14, 23, 29). Mark's introduction of the feeding story by means of this shepherd imagery from the Hebrew Bible suggests both that the people's material needs are about to be provided and that "the lostness of the people is about to be remedied."⁷³

In Mark's story, Jesus's initial action that results from his compassion is to teach the crowd.⁷⁴ Initially there is no presenting physical need necessitating a miracle. Instead, it is the people's spiritual need that is addressed.⁷⁵ While the juxtaposition of the story of Herod's killing John the Baptist with the feeding story sets up a contrast between Herod's leadership and the leadership the people needed, as just noted, Jesus's action to teach the shepherdless crowd suggests a leadership void in the spiritual realm, an inadequacy in the religious

⁷² Boring, *Mark*, 183.

⁷³ Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 130. See also Broadhead, *Teaching with Authority*, 123: "The constant use of OT imagery transforms this narrative into the story of God's call and care for a shepherdless people."

⁷⁴ Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 130, notes that Moses also taught and provided nourishment for the people in the wilderness but also notes that Mark does not develop the theme of Jesus as a second Moses. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 77, suggests that Mark is intentional in portraying Jesus like Moses here but concludes that the comparison is more so between Jesus and God. Along these lines, Voorwinde, *Jesus' Emotions in the Gospels*, 87, states that "although it would be an attractive possibility to see Jesus as a new Moses, this would not exhaust the Old Testament imagery that lies behind the account. In other instances of a leadership vacuum it is Yahweh himself, or his servant David, who assumes the role of the shepherd of his people (Ezek 34:11–24; Zech 10:3)."

⁷⁵ Broadhead, *Teaching with Authority*, 118–19, notes the unexpected nature of the reference to Jesus's teaching here: "By replacing the expected miracle activity with emphasis on Jesus' teaching, the import of the story becomes clear: it is the teaching of Jesus which properly satisfies the need of these shepherdless people." As will be argued here, the compassion of Jesus in this narrative extends equally to the physical need of the people, however, even though the physical need is introduced later. The OT imagery makes explicit the connection between shepherding the people and providing nourishment. In general, Broadhead considers the miraculous activity of Jesus as functioning to support the authority of Jesus's teaching. This position, much like the "corrective Christology" approaches discussed in chapter 1, undercuts the significance of the miracles themselves in the narrative and in our understanding of the characterization of Jesus in Mark.

leadership of the people. This notion recalls the earlier comment of a crowd that Jesus teaches as one “having authority, and not as the scribes” (1:22).⁷⁶

As it becomes late, the people’s physical need takes center stage in the narrative, beginning with the observation of the disciples that the people would need food (6:35–36). As the story unfolds, it becomes clear that Jesus’s others-oriented service for the crowd would have not only a spiritual component but also a physical one. To this point in Mark’s story, whenever Jesus has encountered a need, he himself has acted. But here, he asks the disciples—fresh off their ministry tour, which had included the ability to perform miraculous deeds—to feed the crowd (6:37). Mark had prepared the audience to assume that Jesus would take on the role of shepherd here (6:34)—and ultimately he does. But first, Jesus enjoins the disciples to shepherd the people. The disciples’ response suggests their continued misunderstanding (6:37). The extent of their compassion is the idea to send the people away in time to find nourishment (somehow, in a deserted place late in the day).⁷⁷ They had previously possessed Jesus’s authority in doing wonders (6:7), but now in Jesus’s presence their focus is only on what they possess apart from Jesus: a mere five loaves and two fish (6:38).⁷⁸ Jesus has another idea, however, and he proceeds with performing the miracle himself (6:39–43). The miraculous supply of food in a wilderness area again hearkens back to the exodus narrative (see Exod 16).

In Mark’s story of the unfolding of the miracle itself, yet more imagery appears from the Hebrew Bible as Jesus instructs the disciples to organize the people in groups of hundreds and fifties (see Exod 18:21–25; Num 31:14; Deut 1:15) on the green grass (see Ps 23:2).⁷⁹ The echo of Psalm 23 brings in yet

76 See France, *Gospel of Mark*, 265, who suggests that the “untended” state of the people of Galilee may be a reflection of the inadequacy of their spiritual leadership, with specific reference to Mark 7:1–23; 12:38–40.

77 More negatively, Robert M. Fowler, *Loaves and Fishes: The Function of the Feeding Stories in the Gospel of Mark*, SBL Dissertation Series 54 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), 72, assesses the disciples’ response thus: “They are not possessed with Jesus’s compassion, and their thoughts on the subject are uttered brusquely: ‘Send them away.’”

78 Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 130. It has been suggested that the disciples’ possession of bread reflects disobedience to Jesus’s earlier command to have “no bread” with them (6:8); see, for example, Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 130; Fowler, *Loaves and Fishes*, 118. This seems overstated, as Jesus’s command to bring no bread did not prohibit their ability to acquire bread amid the hospitality they were encouraged to receive (6:10).

79 Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 131, notes that the division of the people along these lines was idealized in the Qumran sectarian texts; see, e.g., 1QSa 2:11–22.

another allusion to shepherd imagery, with its depiction of YHWH as the shepherd who provides for basic human needs, including food.⁸⁰

Mark's account offers no specific explanation of how the miraculous multiplication occurs in spite of the use of a number of action words: "taking," "looking up to heaven," "blessed," "broke the loaves and gave," and "set before" (6:41).⁸¹ Somehow there is enough for everyone. There are even leftovers, a detail that recalls yet another text from the Hebrew Bible (Elisha's miraculous feeding of a hundred men, 2 Kgs 4:42–44), a text that in fact provides the closest parallel to the present story.⁸² Jesus's inclusion of the disciples in the distribution of the food (6:41) allows them to take on a shepherding role in spite of their misunderstanding.⁸³

While the portrayal of Jesus's compassion is separated from the feeding miracle itself by the reference to Jesus's teaching, it seems right to understand the feeding miracle as an outflow of that same compassion.⁸⁴ The proliferation

80 For Boring, the echo of Psalm 23 here, along with the implied connection to the psalm through shepherding imagery, suggests that this "banquet" in the wilderness is envisioned as a preview of the future messianic banquet: "The shepherd of Ps 23, as understood in some streams of first-century Judaism, is the eschatological shepherd who will give 'rest' ..., will lead in paths of righteousness by his teaching of Torah, will make the people recline on the green grass, and will prepare a table, that is, celebrate the eschatological banquet in the wilderness. All these motifs are found in Mark's story and illustrate that the feeding story is incorporated within this image of Jesus as eschatological teacher" (Boring, *Mark*, 183).

81 Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 131. Much discussion has occurred over the connection of this episode with the eucharistic celebrations of the early Christian communities. It does not serve our purposes here to engage in this discussion; for a helpful treatment of the topic, see Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:959–66. See also Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 76–77: "The absence of wine, the use of fish and the fact that Mark has not conformed this story to that of the Last Supper (cf. Mk 6:41 and 14:22) argue against a thorough eucharistic interpretation of this feeding. Notwithstanding, by Jesus' taking, blessing, breaking and giving the bread, Mark's readers could hardly miss anticipating the eucharist and its portrayal of Jesus' self-giving."

82 As is often noted, the story of Jesus's feeding of five thousand men with five loaves and two fish greatly supersedes the story of Elisha's feeding of a hundred men with twenty loaves, the implication being that Jesus is a greater prophet than even the prophets of old. See, for example, Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 76. For more on the comparison between Jesus and Elisha, see Raymond E. Brown, "Jesus and Elisha," *Perspective* 12 no. 1 (1971): 85–104; see also Fowler, *Loaves and Fishes*, 125–26.

83 Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 131; see also the comment of Marcus, *Mark*, 497: "Despite their foibles, they will be used by Jesus to transmit the gift of God to the multitudes."

84 See Voorwinde, *Jesus' Emotions in the Gospels*, 87–88. See also Stein, *Mark*, 313: "In Jewish literature the 'feeding' of Israel is often associated with their being taught the Torah (2 Bar 77:13–15)."

of imagery from the Hebrew Bible throughout this story⁸⁵ suggests that all the events of the story, taken together, encompass what it means for Jesus to take on the role of compassionate shepherd for the people. Spencer describes Jesus's compassionate care as "not merely impulsive but durative ... not selective but comprehensive, nurturing the whole person through teaching, healing, and now feeding."⁸⁶

In contrast to Herod, whose actions are marked by self-indulgence and preservation of status, and in contrast to the religious leaders who are at times blind to human need, this shepherd acts out of a deep, visceral feeling of compassion toward others—an emotion that motivates the way he addresses human need.⁸⁷ Jesus emerges as the others-oriented shepherd the people need. As Lane states, "If the crowd has been described as sheep without a shepherd, Jesus is presented as the Shepherd who provides for all of their needs so that they lack nothing."⁸⁸ The imagery of the sheep and the shepherd occurs another time in Mark's Gospel, in the context of Jesus's ultimate act of service on behalf of others—the declaration that the shepherd would be struck down and the sheep would be scattered (14:27).⁸⁹ Here in the feeding story, Jesus's shepherding role involves tangible help to address a physical need.

The kingdom that Jesus was announcing among the people, through messages of repentance and a call to a proper response (see, e.g., 1:14–15; 4:1–34), was being accompanied by the proclamation that occurred through his actions, which were dominated by the promotion of human flourishing and service toward others. And now (if not already in 1:41) we are given a picture of the Markan Jesus's motivating compassion. This compassion has been implicit in Jesus's others-oriented miraculous healings—especially in the face of opposition—but is here made explicit in Mark's use of *σπλαγχνίζομαι*. For R. T. France, the use of this verb, combined with the imagery of sheep being

85 See Moloney's summarizing comment: "The links are strong between this first bread miracle, the exodus, and the Jewish traditions of the people and their shepherd" (*Gospel of Mark*, 132).

86 Spencer, *Passions*, 191. The mention of healing here alongside teaching and feeding is a product of Spencer's dealing with the parallel accounts of Matthew and Mark together.

87 These contrasts provide a clear example of what Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story*, 97, describe as "two kinds of power" that arise throughout the Markan plot: "One power comes from God and serves people, bringing life and wholeness. The other power—dominating or patriarchal power—is humanly self-serving and is destructive in its efforts to preserve and secure the power holder."

88 Lane, *Gospel of Mark*, 233; see also France, *Gospel of Mark*, 265.

89 See Fowler, *Loaves and Fishes*, 79.

without a shepherd, “presents Jesus above all as the one who cares.”⁹⁰ The emotion enhances the characterization of the miracle-working Jesus, offering a presentation of one who is deeply concerned for the well-being of those he encounters.

As indicated earlier, the disciples are significant characters in this story as they are invited to participate in the compassionate ministry of Jesus. So, to what extent did the disciples grasp this others-oriented service of Jesus? The Markan narrator would later comment on their misunderstanding regarding this miracle (6:52)—in spite of their being invited to participate in the miracle and then experiencing another nature miracle on the lake (6:46–51). Their misunderstanding of what Jesus had come to accomplish would play a crucial role in Mark’s story as it proceeds. The disciples’ reactions to Jesus’s predictions of his suffering and death (8:31–33; 9:30–32; 10:32–40)—his climactic act of selfless service toward others—suggests that they were having difficulty understanding not only the notion of a suffering Messiah but also the nature and outworking of his compassion. Perhaps the audience is beginning to see at this point, however, the proper response within the kingdom of God to encountered human need.

4.3 *Mark 8:1–10: Feeding of the Four Thousand*

In between the two feeding stories, Mark describes a number of additional miracles performed by Jesus. After a conflict with some religious leaders regarding inner and outer cleanliness, the setting shifts away from Galilee to Gentile-dominated regions (7:24, 31). But even there, the miraculous activity of Jesus continues. In fact, the story of the Syrophenician woman’s daughter being healed (7:24–30) highlights the notion that Jesus’s restorative healing ministry and promotion of human flourishing within the kingdom of God was extending beyond the Jewish people. Within this section, the only appearance of an emotion in the portrayal of Jesus comes in the healing of a man who was deaf and mute (7:31–37). In his encounter with the man, Jesus looks up to heaven and “sighs” (στενάζω) prior to performing the miracle (7:34). While hard to relate this term to a particular English emotion, the idea seems to be that of an involuntary groaning at an undesirable situation, especially one’s own or another’s suffering.⁹¹ Perhaps the image we are to understand, then, is of

90 France, *Gospel of Mark*, 265.

91 BDAG, “στενάζω,” 942; Spencer, *Passions*, 193. Voorwinde, *Jesus’ Emotions in the Gospels*, 99, states, “In the canonical LXX, with which Mark was no doubt familiar, the verb *stenazō* is associated with weeping (Job 30:25), mourning (Job 31:38; Isa 19:8; 24:7), lament (Nah 3:7), affliction (Lam 1:8, 21), and the prospect of bitter grief (Ezek 21:6–7) and disaster (Ezek 26:15).”

Jesus entering into the man's distress.⁹² The compassionate shepherd of God's people (6:30–44) was also entering into the distress of the Gentiles, and his healing ministry was not limited as he operated outside the bounds of Israel, as had been the case in his hometown (6:1–6). This extension of compassion to the Gentiles would become even more explicit in the second feeding story.

The appearance of a second miraculous feeding story in Mark's narrative has engendered much scholarly discussion.⁹³ It is outside the scope of the present study to engage in the scholarly debates regarding the source of the material. From a narrative-critical perspective, the presence of the two stories serves certain purposes within Mark's overall narrative.⁹⁴ Two such purposes will be highlighted here.

First, the second feeding story serves to highlight "the obtuseness of the disciples,"⁹⁵ who, in terms of Mark's story line, have recently witnessed a miraculous feeding.⁹⁶ When the disciples are faced with a similar situation—with fewer people and more loaves—Mark's audience is surprised to discover that they seem not to consider the possibility of Jesus performing a similar

92 See Voorwinde, *Jesus' Emotions in the Gospels*, 100.

93 Much of the discussion has focused on Mark's use of source material. The well-known proposal of Paul Achtemeier, who argued that a pre-Markan double cycle of miracles was adopted by Mark throughout 4:35–8:38 (see Achtemeier, *Jesus and the Miracle Tradition*, 55–86), has become increasingly rejected; see Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 152 (though for a recent proponent of Achtemeier's viewpoint, see Collins, *Mark*, 378). Many contend that Mark made use of two independent traditions; see, e.g., Gnlika, *Markus*, 1300–301; Josef Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, Regensburger Neues Testament (Regensburg: Pustet Verlag, 1981), 218–19; Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:951–58. Others suggest that Mark knew of two separate feeding events; see, for example, Lane, *Mark*, 271–72; France, *Gospel of Mark*, 307; M. J. Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Marc* (Paris: Gabalda, 1929), 13–94. Fowler argues that the feeding story in 8:1–10 is traditional while the story in 6:30–44 is a Markan creation. As such, he states, "To rearrange or untangle these stories in an attempt to find pre-gospel cycles is, as we have repeatedly claimed, a vain effort to recover something that probably never existed; but even more seriously, it does violence to the text the author has given us" (Fowler, *Loaves and Fishes*, 148). While I would not state it in such stark terms, I agree with the notion that it is preferable to focus on the narrative as we have it and how the presence of the two stories contributes to Mark's purposes and objectives; see the similar perspective of Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 152, who concludes: "This is effective storytelling on Mark's part."

94 See Boring, *Mark*, 219.

95 Beavis, *Mark*, 128.

96 Fowler argues that 6:30–44 sets up the reader's perspective on 8:1–10, particularly in how the disciples are viewed. Fowler states, "We may conclude with assurance that the crux of both feeding stories is the interaction between Jesus and the disciples" (*Loaves and Fishes*, 93); see also Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 153–54; Boring, *Mark*, 219–20; Broadhead, *Teaching with Authority*, 135.

miracle (8:4). The disciples' misunderstanding becomes a dominant theme in 8:22–10:52, a section bracketed by stories of Jesus healing people with blindness. Prior to that section, however, the disciples' blindness in the feeding stories is notable, as highlighted in Jesus's questions of 8:14–21: "Do you not yet understand?"

Interpreters often focus on the misunderstanding of the disciples in terms of how they perceive Jesus's identity. This aspect of their misunderstanding certainly comes into focus in the climactic question "Who do you say I am?" (8:29) and in the ensuing response by Peter (8:29, 32). They may have begun to grasp that Jesus is the Messiah, but they fail to understand what that means in terms of his mission—his suffering and death. But another facet of Jesus that the disciples seem to misunderstand is the scope of his others-oriented service—not only his climactic expression of service, announced in his threefold prediction, but also his genuine compassion and care for others (see 9:33–41; 10:13–16, 28–31, 35–45). The portrayal of the disciples in the two feeding stories, as not sharing Jesus's compassion for the crowds, or perhaps doing so in a very limited way, contributes to this overall depiction of the disciples as still having much to learn regarding what it means to follow the compassionate shepherd whose kingdom puts emphasis on the restoration, healing, and flourishing of those in need.

A second purpose that is achieved by virtue of a second feeding story is the furtherance of the Gentile mission in Mark. After operating primarily throughout the Jewish territory of Galilee, the Markan Jesus turns for an extended time to Gentile regions, beginning with Tyre (7:24). In the ensuing encounter with a Syrophenician woman, Jesus seems initially to reject, or at least downplay, a Gentile mission: "Let the children be fed first, for it is not good to take the bread (*ἄρτος*) of the children and throw it to the dogs" (7:27). But following the woman's assertive response—"Lord, even the dogs under the table eat from the crumbs of the children" (7:28)—Jesus performs the miracle she had requested. The story that follows—the healing of a man who was deaf and mute—is also set in predominantly Gentile territory, further showing that Jesus is indeed willing to "feed the dogs."

As the Markan narrative turns to introduce another large crowd lacking food (8:1), the setting is presumably still a primarily Gentile one, based on the prior geographical reference (7:31).⁹⁷ The question raised in Jesus's interaction

97 See France, *Gospel of Mark*, 305, who sees no other reason "why else Mark should have chosen to include a second feeding miracle (on a reduced scale) which so closely duplicates the pattern of the feeding of the five thousand. ... Given a Gentile location, however,

with the Syrophoenician woman—would Jesus provide nourishment to Gentiles too?—thus receives in the second miraculous feeding a definitive yes. In the story that unfolds, Jesus indeed provides ἄρτος to Gentiles in need (8:6). The mission of Jesus—the proclamation of the kingdom of God in word and deed—extends beyond the bounds of Israel.⁹⁸ Broadhead states,

Jesus' mission to the Jews is now affirmed among the Gentiles. Thus, the story confirms the activity of Jesus among the Gentiles established in the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman (7.24–31) and in the healing of the deaf and silent man (7.31–37). Here Jesus calls forth a new people of God, and the disciples are clear witnesses to this activity. Indeed, they are partners and participants in this mission, as they were in the Jewish feeding.⁹⁹

Not only does Jesus provide food for this crowd, as he had for the crowd in 6:30–44, his emotion is portrayed as the same: He has compassion for the people (8:2). Mark again employs the term σπλαγχνίζομαι to describe Jesus's

the second feeding miracle fits well into Mark's plan, as the third of a set of miracles (an exorcism, a healing, and nature miracle) which extend the mission of the Messiah of Israel for the benefit also of neighbouring peoples." See also Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 81; Broadhead, *Teaching with Authority*, 135. The opening words of Mark 8 (Ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις, "In those days") also suggest a time contemporaneous with the preceding events; see Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 152. Scholars have identified several other indicators to suggest a Gentile setting for this second feeding story: the lack of imagery from the Hebrew Bible compared to 6:30–44 (Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 153–54), the numbers that appear in the story (seven loaves and seven baskets of leftovers versus the twelve baskets leftover among a Jewish crowd; see Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 155), the word for "basket" (in 8:8, the word is σπυρίς, a regular Greek term for a large basket, while in 6:43, the word used is κόφινος, denoting a basket that was commonly used by Jewish people; see Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 155; Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 81), and the statement at the end of the story that Jesus and the disciples got into a boat and went to a presumably Jewish region. (While Δαλμανουθά has not been identified, the appearance of Magdala or Magdala in some manuscripts and the presence of Jewish religious leaders in 8:11 suggest a Jewish-Galilean setting.)

98 See Beavis, *Mark*, 128: "It seems clear that this [the placement of this feeding story after two miracles for Gentiles] is a deliberate reinforcement of the theme that Jesus brings the good news to both Jews and gentiles, who are entitled to more than 'crumbs' (cf. 7:28)." Or, as Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 156, puts it: "Jesus has fed the children in 6:31–44 (see 7:27), and in 8:1–9 he has acted out his acceptance of the principle articulated by the Syrophoenician woman: 'Even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs' (see 7:28). He has fed the Gentiles."

99 Broadhead, *Teaching with Authority*, 137.

response to seeing people in need.¹⁰⁰ Here, it comes in a first-person statement Jesus makes to the disciples, as opposed to being a narrated comment (6:34). Thus, characters in the story—the disciples—and not simply the audience, are here provided an inside view into Jesus's emotional reaction to the situation.¹⁰¹ This gives the disciples in the story an opportunity to reflect Jesus's compassion, which, as we will see, they apparently fail to do.

Whereas in the prior feeding story, the depiction of Jesus's compassion is followed by Jesus's teaching the crowd, and then later providing physical nourishment, here the emotional portrayal is linked immediately and exclusively to the presenting physical need. The need itself is also depicted as starker: This crowd had been with Jesus three days and is at risk for serious physical problems if they are sent away (8:3), whereas in the prior feeding story, it had simply gotten late that day (6:35). Yet, perhaps the lack of a reference to teaching in this story has more to do with a lack of concern to highlight a spiritual leadership void among a predominantly Gentile crowd, who were not previously expected to be shepherded in the vein of Psalm 23 or Ezekiel 34.¹⁰² Regardless, the compassionate shepherd of God's people from 6:30–44 extends the same compassion toward a Gentile crowd, fulfilling a primary shepherding role in feeding those under his care.

Again, the disciples fail to see a solution to feeding a hungry crowd with little supplies (8:4). Even though Jesus has expressed his compassionate desire to help the crowd and indicated that the alternative is scarcely an option ("they will faint on the way," 8:3), the disciples' focus is again on what they have apart from Jesus (seven loaves). Yet, as in the prior feeding story, Jesus includes the disciples in the miracle as they distribute the food to the crowd (8:6–7). As the Markan narrative continues, however, it becomes clear that the disciples still have much to learn about the others-oriented service of Jesus that is marked by compassion. As has been indicated, the section of Mark that follows closely

100 Spencer, *Passions*, 193, suggests that because Jesus, in his public ministry, lived as an itinerant, dependent on the hospitality of others, he had "solidarity—indeed, we might assume, sympathy or fellow-feeling—with the plight of desperate people roaming (like 'sheep') from village to village and into wilderness areas seeking help to survive." It seems, though, that one does not need to base Jesus's potential "fellow-feeling" regarding hunger pangs on the itinerancy of his ministry, as mere human existence provides occasion for experiencing hunger.

101 See Anderson, *Emotions of Jesus*, 117.

102 It should be noted, however, that the crowd, having been with Jesus for three days (8:2), presumably had been the recipients of Jesus's teaching. The point here is simply that teaching is not explicitly tied to the display of Jesus's compassion in this case, as it had been in 6:30–44.

after this second feeding story (8:22–10:52) puts the disciples' misunderstanding on display further, as they repeatedly put forward ideas different from Jesus regarding the purposes of the kingdom of God. And not only do the disciples fail to comprehend a suffering messiah, they also seem to have difficulty grasping a kingdom in which the needs of others take precedence over status and advancement, a kingdom in which one enters into the suffering of others, desiring their well-being and flourishing in this world from a place of deeply felt compassion. Spencer sums up the compassion of Jesus in the feeding stories in this way:

More than honor and duty drive Jesus's feeding ministry.¹⁰³ He's no philanthropist boosting his social reputation by generous almsgiving. Still less is he a palace-dweller and party-thrower like Herod and Caesar, currying favor with cronies and keeping the rabble in line with periodic gluts of "bread and circuses." Moreover, he's no functional social worker or religious administrator manning a food bank (no disrespect to such needful work). Torah commandments to love neighbor and stranger root deep in Jesus's heart and mind, innards and intellect, springing up from his *splanchna*, as it were, gushing out from his guts into a feast of belly-filling sustenance for myriads.¹⁰⁴

4.4 *Mark 9:14–29: Healing of a Boy with an Evil Spirit*

In the Gospel's central section (8:22–10:52), which is bracketed by two stories of Jesus healing blindness, the focus is on what it means truly to see Jesus and the purposes of the kingdom he had been proclaiming. Those who might be expected to have a proper viewpoint regarding Jesus and the kingdom of God—primarily the disciples but also the wealthy and those who are well-versed in the law (see 10:1–9, 17–27)—consistently misunderstand Jesus, while those who are not expected to understand—children and the blind—are depicted as understanding (10:13–16, 46–52). Throughout this section, what marks a true follower of Jesus is others-oriented service (8:34–38; 9:33–37; 10:21–31, 35–45).

103 Cf. the miracle attributed to Vespasian in Tacitus, *Histories* 4.81; see the discussion of this miracle story in chapter 2. If honor or duty were the motivator in Jesus's feeding the multitudes, that is, if the power differential was a point of emphasis, then it seems likely that the term ἐλεέω (or a cognate) would be used. See the discussions of ἐλεέω in chapters 2 and 3.

104 Spencer, *Passions*, 193–94.

In Mark's narrative arrangement, the disciples' failure to understand the messiahship of Jesus is made clearest in relation to Jesus's three predictions of his suffering and death. Even when Peter provides the correct answer to the question of Jesus's identity (8:29),¹⁰⁵ he is immediately shown to have a faulty understanding of what that means (8:31–33). Following the second prediction, the narrator comments, "They did not understand this expression, and they were afraid to ask him" (9:32). This is followed immediately in the narrative by the disciples' argument regarding who was the greatest (9:33–37). Finally, after the third prediction, James and John seem to grasp that something significant is about to take place, yet their focus is on their own potential advancement in Jesus's kingdom (10:35–40). The disciples are unable to comprehend a suffering and dying messiah, and their objectives in relation to the kingdom of God are consistently shown to be at cross-purposes with those of Jesus, who points to others-oriented service and sacrifice as the way of the kingdom.¹⁰⁶ And as Jesus had begun to announce, he himself would demonstrate this servanthood climactically in the forthcoming events of his suffering and death.

Aside from the two stories of Jesus healing the blind men that bracket this section (8:22–10:52), the only miracle story comes in the healing of a boy possessed by a demon (9:14–29).¹⁰⁷ The placement of this story after the first passion prediction (8:31) and the Transfiguration (9:2–8) indicates that even though Jesus is clearly aware of his coming fate and ultimate purpose—his suffering, death, resurrection, and glorification—he continues to meet the human suffering he encounters with care and compassion.¹⁰⁸ Mark's narrative presents Jesus as extending the wholeness and restoration of the kingdom of God up to the last week of his life (see 10:46–52, placed just prior to the story of Jesus's entry into Jerusalem).

In this story of the healing of a demon-possessed boy, Mark's audience also encounters the final use of *σπλαγχνίζομαι* in the Gospel. Previously in the Markan narrative, the stirring of Jesus's compassion had been described by the narrator (6:34; see also 1:41) and by Jesus himself (8:2). Now the term is placed

105 As we have seen, the Markan audience had been set up from the beginning of the story (1:1) to perceive Peter's answer as correct.

106 In the words of Moloney (*Gospel of Mark*, 185): "They are beginning to impose their designs upon Jesus (see especially 8:32) and regard discipleship as something they can determine (see 6:7–30)."

107 The three miracle stories in 8:22–10:52 fit well within the context in which the theme of discipleship is prevalent; see France, *Gospel of Mark*, 361: "While Jesus' power is again clearly displayed, as in Act One [for France, 1:14–8:21], the focus now is not on the impression made on the crowd but on the lesson which the experience taught the disciples."

108 As Spencer, *Passions*, 202, puts it, "Jesus deals with the demon-seized boy at the same time that he himself is being seized in the vise of suffering unto death."

on the lips of the petitioner, the boy's father (9:22).¹⁰⁹ The man's plea for Jesus to have compassion suggests that in the story world Jesus has gained a reputation for this particular response to human need—a reputation the Markan audience would have affirmed based upon the two recent uses of this term (6:34; 8:2),¹¹⁰ both of which resulted in Jesus acting on behalf of those in need. The audience is thus prepared to join with this father in expectation that Jesus would respond in a way similar to how he responded to others. The use of the term on the petitioner's lips thus bolsters the notion that this kind of deeply felt, others-oriented compassion is part of the Markan Jesus's character.

The man's plea for compassion comes after the failed attempts of Jesus's disciples (those who were not with Jesus at the Transfiguration) to cast out the demon. The man had brought his son to Jesus, but in Jesus's absence, he asks the disciples to perform the miracle (9:18). While the man may not be privy to this information, Mark's audience is aware at this point of the disciples having been previously successful at exorcism (6:13; see also 3:14–15). Nonetheless, on this occasion they are unsuccessful, which undoubtedly adds to the man's desperation. Following the man's description of the boy's condition and report of the disciples' failure, Jesus, with apparent exasperation,¹¹¹ castigates the faithlessness he encounters (9:19).¹¹² The boy, upon being brought to Jesus,

109 This would fall under Malbon's category "projected Christology," that is, how what others say about Jesus informs the characterization of Jesus in Mark (see Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 57–128). Regarding the suppliant in Mark generally, Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 92, states, "What the suplicants say to or about Jesus is that they trust him as a source of willing power for health and wholeness." As we will examine in what follows, the suppliant in the present story displayed trust initially in bringing his son to Jesus, but his faith wavers following the disciples' failure to help.

110 This point would be bolstered if Mark's audience encountered *σπλαγχνίζομαι* at 1:41; see the earlier discussion of this passage.

111 No term is used to identify Jesus's emotion at this stage. Spencer, *Passions*, 199, lists frustration, disappointment, annoyance, anger, despondency, pessimism, cynicism, skepticism, and incredulity as viable options for describing Jesus's emotional tenor at this point. Exasperation seems to be a fitting general description.

112 The identity of the recipient of Jesus's double rebuke "O faithless generation, how long will I be with you? How long will I put up with you?" is not explicit. Many see the rebuke as directed toward a broad audience, such as the crowd, the nation at large, or even all humanity; see, e.g., Gnllka, *Markus*, 2:47; Rudolf Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium*, Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, 2 vols. (Freiberg: Herder, 1976–77), 2:19–20; Spencer, *Passions*, 199. Some include the petitioning father, whose faith becomes central in v. 24, as a recipient; see, e.g., Christopher D. Marshall, *Faith as a Theme in Mark's Narrative*, SNTSMS 64 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 117–18; Voorwinde, *Jesus' Emotions in the Gospels*, 92. The immediately preceding reference to the disciples' inability to cast out the spirit suggests that at least the disciples should be considered as recipients of the rebuke; see Lane, *Mark*, 332; John Painter, *Mark's Gospel* (New York:

has an outward episode (9:20),¹¹³ after which Jesus curiously requests more information (9:21).¹¹⁴ The father's response to Jesus's question leads into his desperate plea: "If you are able to do anything, help us and have compassion (σπλαγχνισθεῖς) on us" (9:22). As Spencer states, "From the emotional depths of [the man's] being, he appeals to the *splanchna*-depths of Jesus."¹¹⁵ This father hopes that the miserable state of the boy—which Jesus had just witnessed firsthand—and his own agonized condition as a parent would engender a strong, deeply felt reaction from Jesus.

The man's statement "If you are able to do anything" (9:22) presents a contrast to the plea of the man with leprosy in 1:40–45, whose petition expresses Jesus's ability but displays uncertainty regarding Jesus's willingness.¹¹⁶ Here the man is unsure of Jesus's ability, an uncertainty likely enhanced by the disciples' failure to perform the miracle. The different request results in a different response: Whereas Jesus responded to the man with leprosy "I am willing" (1:41), here Jesus's response seems again to be exasperation: "If you are able!" (9:23).¹¹⁷ This initial response from Jesus hardly seems to display the anticipated compassion.¹¹⁸

Routledge, 1997), 133; Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 86. Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 183, contends that Jesus's words are directed solely at the disciples, given the emphasis of the passage (and the larger section) on the disciples.

113 The boy's condition has frequently been labeled epilepsy; see Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 183; Pesch, *Markusevangelium*, 2:89–90; see also, Voorwinde, *Jesus' Emotions in the Gospels*, 92–93, who strongly favors the diagnosis of epilepsy but suggests that the underlying cause is nevertheless demonic in this case. On the dangers of rendering specific medical diagnoses in relation to this story, see Lawrence, *Sense and Stigma*, 104–9.

114 As Boring, *Mark*, 274, states, "It is a strange bit of conversation while the boy is rolling on the ground in convulsions." But the further description of the boy's condition serves for Mark's audience to highlight the severity of the situation, the level of faith required in such a situation, and Jesus's capacity to work the miracle: "Such cases were considered incurable" (Boring, *Mark*, 274). The repeated description also serves as an introduction to the father's desperate plea; see Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 184. For Spencer (*Passions*, 200), Jesus's question "How long has this been happening to him?" and the father's response "From childhood" serves to add to the pathos of the situation.

115 Spencer, *Passions*, 200.

116 See Boring, *Mark*, 274; Spencer, *Passions*, 200. Collins, *Mark*, 438, remarks that the father "expresses ambivalence toward Jesus. ... The fact that he brought his son to Jesus signifies his belief, or at least hope, that Jesus has the power to heal his son. But the qualification 'if you are able in any way' reveals his doubt."

117 The words Εἰ δύνῃ ("If you are able") could be taken as a rebuke of the father's doubt regarding Jesus's ability ("If you are able!" see, e.g., France, *Gospel of Mark*, 367), or as a demand for faith from the father ("If you are able"; see, e.g., Beavis, *Mark*, 139).

118 According to John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, Sacra Pagina 2 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002), 278, "[Mark's] use of the neuter article

The petitioner's emphasis on the question of Jesus's ability further underscores the theme of faith that is prevalent in this miracle story.¹¹⁹ Jesus had condemned faithlessness (9:19); faith becomes the focus of Jesus's interaction with the father (9:23–24),¹²⁰ and the disciples' lack of faith seems to have contributed to their failure (9:28–29).¹²¹

After the father's desperate declaration of belief—"I believe; help my unbelief!" (9:24)¹²²—and the approach of a(nother) crowd,¹²³ Jesus commands the spirit to come out and never enter the boy again (9:25), after which the spirit dramatically departs from the boy, leaving him in apparent lifelessness until Jesus takes him by the hand, raising him up (9:26–27).¹²⁴ The narrative

before repeating verbatim the father's 'if you are able' has the effect of emphasizing that part of the father's request in 9:22 so as then to hold it up to criticism."

- 119 See Broadhead, *Teaching with Authority*, 156–57; Boring, *Mark*, 272; see also Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 86: "Of all the miracle stories in Mark this one treats the subject of faith most thoroughly."
- 120 There is ambiguity in the expression "the one who believes" in v. 23. The prior emphasis on Jesus's ability suggests that the referent is Jesus, yet in what follows, the focus shifts to the father's belief (v. 24). Perhaps both should be considered in view here; see Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 184.
- 121 The rationale given by Jesus for their inability to cast out the demon—lack of prayer—speaks to a lack of faith or at least an ignorance of the source for their authority to cast out demons. Jesus himself had given them the authority for their prior, successful ministry of exorcism (6:7). Jesus's comment suggests that perhaps they were trying to perform the miracle on their own authority, rather than exhibiting faith in God. If so, this makes John's report about the unnamed exorcist in 9:38–41 all the more striking: Perhaps the unnamed exorcist had a better understanding of the needed authority.
- 122 Spencer, *Passions*, 201, astutely compares the father's resilience to that of the Syrophoenician mother (7:24–30).
- 123 Various suggestions have been made regarding the second approach of a crowd in the story (cp. 9:14). This odd detail, along with the twice-reported description of the boy's malady (vv. 17–18, 22), has been given as evidence that two pre-Markan traditions have been brought together in Mark's account; see Bultmann, *History*, 211–12; Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News according to Mark*, trans. Donald H. Madvig (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1970), 187. Others suggest that these oddities are simply the result of Mark's addition of thematic elements into the miracle story; see, e.g., Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:653–56; Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 182–83; Boring, *Mark*, 275. Regarding attempts to harmonize 9:14 and 9:25, some have argued against the notion of a second crowd, suggesting that perhaps the initial crowd was still growing or that perhaps Jesus's conversation with the father took place apart from the crowd; see France, *Gospel of Mark*, 368. Others raise the possibility that another crowd (distinct from the initial ὄχλος) approached after hearing about Jesus's presence; see, e.g., Lane, *Gospel of Mark*, 334.
- 124 Mark's description does not suggest that the boy had actually died and been raised back to life; see the remarks of France, *Gospel of Mark*, 369: "The account of Jesus' taking his hand and raising him up echoes the language used of the raising of Jairus's daughter (5:41–42), but here we are left in no doubt that the impression of death was temporary

then moves to the ensuing, private discussion between Jesus and the disciples regarding their inability to cast out the spirit (9:28–29).

Jesus's response to the man's plea for help and compassion seems initially to be consternation, and his action to cast out the spirit seems to spring more from a desire to avoid a public miracle than from compassion (9:25). As noted, the primary function of this miracle story is to provide instruction on faith—for the disciples in the story world, and by extension, for Mark's audience. And yet, in casting out the spirit, Jesus does fulfill the man's request for compassionate help.¹²⁵ Jesus does indeed perform the miracle. Jesus does indeed bring the healing and restoration characteristic of his proclamation of the kingdom of God. And while the motivating role of Jesus's compassion is more complicated in this story, as compared to the feeding stories, the fact that Mark has placed *σπλαγχνίζομαι* on the lips of one seeking help from Jesus—as a trait that is associated or perhaps even expected of Jesus—indicates that this emotion has become a significant part of Mark's characterization of Jesus. As Spencer suggests regarding the complex portrayal of Jesus in this story—with seemingly mixed emotions—perhaps this “hands-on, on-the-ground work of compassion toward hurting bodies and souls, the actual work of loving neighbors as one-self ... is as demanding and draining ... as it is worthwhile and wonderful.”¹²⁶ In other words, the exasperation and frustration Jesus seems to convey at multiple points in this story do not necessarily need to be viewed as in conflict with his compassion, which is displayed in his healing of the boy.

In the feeding stories, the disciples' dual lack of compassion and lack of faith is evident. They neither match Jesus's compassion for the crowds, in fact desiring to send them away, nor do they exhibit faith that there is any way they could feed such a crowd. In this story, the disciples' compassion (or lack thereof) does not come into focus as clearly, whereas the issue of faith is

and mistaken. This is not another resuscitation, but the restoration of the boy to normality after a traumatic experience of exorcism.” See also Voorwinde, *Jesus' Emotions in the Gospels*, 95. For ideas on how the language used by Mark here might have been understood in relation to Jesus's death and resurrection, see Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 88.

125 Lane, *Gospel of Mark*, 332–33, suggests that Jesus's further inquiry into the boy's condition also demonstrates his compassion: “It is evident that the Lord was deeply moved. His question concerning the length of time the boy had been subject to such attacks shows his deep humanity and concern, for the source of the question is compassion.” For Voorwinde, *Jesus' Emotions in the Gospels*, 95–96, the demonstration of Jesus's compassion in performing this miracle points forward—by virtue of the resurrection language of 9:26–27—to his greatest act of compassion, his own death and resurrection.

126 Spencer, *Passions*, 202.

prevalent. Nonetheless, in the story's subtle suggestions that the disciples were relying on their own abilities rather than on God's authority,¹²⁷ this may be yet another demonstration that their primary concerns at this point fall in line more with self than with others—an issue Jesus addresses repeatedly throughout this section of Mark.¹²⁸ And as they engage in argument with the scribes, possibly instead of turning to the source of authority in prayer (9:14, 29),¹²⁹ a boy's suffering continues. Mark's characterization of the disciples throughout this section (8:22–10:52) shows that the disciples still have much to learn about others-oriented service and the promotion of human flourishing that springs forth from deeply felt compassion.¹³⁰

In the rest of Mark's Gospel, we see the disciples continuing to have difficulty understanding the service and self-sacrifice of Jesus, which would be displayed ultimately in his arrest, trial, suffering, and death. In those final phases of Jesus's life, the disciples' failure comes to a climax in their betrayal (14:10–11, 43–46), abandonment (14:50), and denial of Jesus (14:66–72). And in Mark's Gospel, even after Jesus's resurrection, the disciples are absent from the story (16:1–8). Yet, Mark's audience is aware of the statement of Jesus indicating that

127 Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 86, notes that the word used in 9:18 to describe the disciples' inability to perform the exorcism, ἰσχύω, connotes "the idea of self-generated or innate strength."

128 See 8:32–33; 9:33–37, 38; 10:13–16, 28, 35–37. Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 185–86, states, "The disciples are presented as becoming increasingly self-sufficient. They were called to 'follow' Jesus (1:16–20; 2:14–15), to 'be with' him in order to be able to cast out demons (3:14–15). They were sent by Jesus and succeeded in their mission of casting out demons (6:7–13), but returned to Jesus, to report all the things *they had done* (6:30). ... Their lack of faith (4:41), hardness of heart (6:52), and increasing blindness and lack of understanding (8:17–18) have brought them to a stage where they are unable to perform as disciples *of Jesus* (9:18, 28). This is why he tells them to redirect their attention to God: 'This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.' It is not *the disciples* who drive out demons, but God. ... They must learn to turn to God in faith and prayer if they hope to be successful *disciples of Jesus*" (emphases original).

129 The attempt to draw a contrast between the story's emphasis on faith and the injunction to prayer (e.g., Hooker, *Saint Mark*, 225) seems overplayed; see Moloney, *Gospel of Mark*, 186; see also Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 88, who stresses that "this combination of faith and prayer is obviously important to Mark" (pointing to 11:24) and that here, in relation to a story that has emphasized faith, prayer refers to "an expression of total trust in and dependence on the power" given to the disciples.

130 France, *Gospel of Mark*, 370, comments, "[The disciples'] public humiliation has been a necessary part of their re-education to the principles of the kingdom of God." As has been argued, the disciples' misunderstanding of the kingdom purposes of Jesus, particularly his compassionate service toward others, precedes this situation of "public humiliation" (see, for example, the feeding stories).

he would see the disciples in Galilee (14:28; 16:7). Mark's audience is likely also aware of how the disciples' story continued in the decades that followed Jesus's death and resurrection. Mark's entire story, including its striking ending, in which the first recipients of the news of Jesus's resurrection are depicted as afraid and silent, and in which his disciples are noticeably absent, calls upon those who hear the story to choose for themselves whether they will follow the way of this kingdom, the way of this Son of Man—not only in a willingness to suffer and die but also in a willingness to meet others in need with compassionate service.

5 The Role of *σπλαγχνίζομαι* in the Characterization of Jesus in Mark

After examining these stories in which Jesus's compassion is featured, we return to the questions asked at the beginning of the chapter: What does the use of *σπλαγχνίζομαι* contribute to Mark's characterization of the miracle worker Jesus? How might this term, used in the extant literature of no other miracle worker prior to the Markan Jesus, shed light on Jesus's miracles in Mark? And how might Mark's audience view this emotion in relation to Mark's overall objectives? A few conclusions are in order.

First, this study adheres to the idea that the proclamation and arrival of the kingdom of God—which occurs through the Markan Jesus's words *and* deeds—forms the centerpiece of Jesus's life and ministry in the Gospel of Mark, from the first mention of the kingdom (1:14–15) to the death and resurrection of the one who is ironically proclaimed king in his suffering (see 15:18, 26). The miracle stories, so prevalent in Mark, are a crucial component of this kingdom's arrival, and they display in a striking way the restoration, healing, and wholeness that are attributes of that kingdom. These stories are not mere demonstrations of Jesus's power, serving a secondary role to what he had actually come to accomplish through his suffering and death. For Mark, they are central to what the kingdom of God is all about.¹³¹ Jesus's actions to heal, to bring life, and to release the afflicted and oppressed are precisely the kingdom of God at work in this world. Spencer states, "Jesus relentlessly pursues a restorative, redemptive mission endowed with considerable power to help others."¹³² Yes, the suffering

¹³¹ Cf. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 347, who comments on the Gospel's portrayal of Jesus's own perspective regarding the miracles: "It is not that Jesus understood his miracles to be evidence of the dawning or nearness of the kingdom of God. Rather, *the miracles are themselves the eschatological kingdom of God in operation*" (emphasis original).

¹³² Spencer, *Passions*, 43.

and death are the ultimate act of Jesus's sacrificial service on behalf of humanity. But Mark indicates that Jesus's program of bringing human flourishing also occurs through the way he addresses human need in his on-the-ground encounters with those who are suffering. Elizabeth Struthers Malbon helpfully elucidates the connection in Mark's Gospel between the kingdom of God, the miracles, and Jesus's death:

The Markan Jesus who proclaims and participates in the in-breaking of the rule of God, restoring health to the powerless ill and hungry, both within his own group and beyond it, insists on continuing to serve those with the least status in society and teach whoever wishes to do the will of God to do the same, even at the clear risk of losing his life at the hands of the established powers, and accepts that risk as the will of God. This is how the Markan Jesus is characterized by his actions.¹³³

Second, because this (all that was stated in the previous paragraph) is the case, the portrait of Jesus that emerges in the encounters are important for the way we understand the characterization of the Markan Jesus.¹³⁴ He is not presented as aloof to or avoidant of human suffering. Rather, the picture Mark's audience gets of Jesus in the miracle stories is that he is deeply affected by human suffering.¹³⁵ Philosopher and emotion theorist Martha Nussbaum discusses how the depth of a person's emotions is determined by how important the object is to the person.¹³⁶ The encounters Jesus has with suffering others frequently stir up his emotions, and he is motivated by those emotions.¹³⁷ While

¹³³ Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 42–43.

¹³⁴ This notion of "portrait through encounter" serves as an allusion to Wendy Cotter's book on the topic, *The Christ of the Miracle Stories: Portrait through Encounter*. Cotter argues against the notion that the miracle stories in the Gospels simply follow a miracle-story form known in the Greco-Roman world propagated, e.g., by Bultmann and Dibelius and that the story surrounding the miracle is unimportant. Cotter demonstrates that the Gospel writers' emphasis on the encounters of Jesus with petitioners is significant, primarily in how these encounters illuminate the characterization of Jesus and provide a model for others (see especially Cotter, *Christ of the Miracle Stories*, 1–5).

¹³⁵ See Cotter, *Christ of the Miracle Stories*, 8–9: Jesus answers petitioners not only with a miracle but does so "in a way that shows deep recognition of the person's need."

¹³⁶ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 30–33, 55–56. I am indebted to Matthew Elliott for succinctly summarizing this aspect of Nussbaum's work (Elliott, *Faithful Feelings*, 33).

¹³⁷ As seen in Table 1 toward the beginning of the chapter, nine of the sixteen emotion terms that appear in the Gospel of Mark occur in the context of a miracle story. Jesus's emotions in Mark are thus often on display in his direct encounters with human suffering. For a discussion of compassion and motivation in relation to the historical Jesus, see Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 264.

the associated emotion is not always compassion, this one comes up repeatedly in the narrative. In the words of Destro and Pesce, “Mark uses the verb *splanchnizomai* to define an upheaval in Jesus that generated his action. This verb shows us how Mark envisaged the intimate motivations of Jesus.”¹³⁸ In narrative-critical terms, *σπλάγχνα*-compassion, by virtue of its repeated appearance in Mark’s narrative, could be described as a character trait of Jesus.¹³⁹ And the fact that the word used to describe this trait—*σπλάγχνιζομαι*—was both a highly descriptive, visceral term and a word seldom used previously suggests that for Mark’s audience, this reaction of Jesus to human need was both striking and memorable. Through the use of this descriptor—a descriptor quite unnecessary in terms of a traditional miracle story—the Markan Jesus is characterized as one who enters (emotionally and physically) into human need, is affected by it, and has a deep desire for the suffering to be alleviated.

In the first feeding story, he is depicted as the compassionate shepherd in the tradition of the Hebrew Scriptures, providing for the needs of his people (6:30–44). The second feeding story indicates that this compassion is extended to the Gentiles (8:1–10). In the story of the boy with an unclean spirit, Jesus’s *σπλάγχνα*-compassion has become a part of his reputation. Aside from these three clear instances of the Markan Jesus expressing compassion, the other miracle stories recounted throughout Mark (including 1:40–45, which may be a fourth instance of *σπλάγχνιζομαι*) portray a miracle worker who responds to encountered human need with compassionate care, in attitudes and actions that entail the arrival of the kingdom of God on earth. And while the narrative leads ultimately to the cross, the climactic demonstration of Jesus’s suffering on behalf of humanity, the suffering son of humanity suffers with humanity prior to the cross.¹⁴⁰ To put it another way, what it meant for the Markan Jesus to usher in the kingdom of God was not simply that he would experience suffering for others on the cross—though that is certainly the key component!—but also that he would enter the suffering of others throughout his ministry and

138 Adriana Destro and Mauro Pesce, *Encounters with Jesus: The Man in His Place and Time*, trans. Brian McNeil (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 158.

139 As Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story*, 100, denote, analyzing characters includes observing “what drives and motivates the characters ... [and] what their traits are.” For more on emotions as expressions of character traits, see Roberts, *Spiritual Emotions*, 19–20.

140 As has been suggested, this conclusion serves to challenge the demarcation between the powerful miracle-working Jesus of the first half of the Gospel and the suffering Son of Man of the second half of the Gospel; see Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 95.

demonstrate an others-focused servanthood that encompasses the whole person, emotions included. F. Scott Spencer describes this point well:

In some measure, mysteriously unique to him in his full-fledged union with God and humanity in the fellowship of suffering, Jesus is vulnerable to proximate, painful injury and infirmity. And he operates out of this vulnerability with raw passion, including periodic frustration and weariness as well as persistent compassion and mercy—marks of a wounded healer who truly “sympathizes with our weaknesses,” to borrow the language of Hebrews, and welcomes our bold supplication, with whatever faith we have, “so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need”. (Heb 4:15–16)¹⁴¹

Finally, Mark’s depiction of Jesus’s deep, visceral, emotional response to human need points the audience to the conclusion that one’s emotional response to human suffering is important. As has been discussed throughout this chapter, the response to Jesus and to his promotion of the purposes of the kingdom of God is a crucial component of the Markan narrative.¹⁴² While the responses of various characters are on display throughout the Gospel of Mark, it is the response of the disciples that often comes to the fore. It has been argued here that the disciples’ misunderstanding comes not only in their failure to comprehend Jesus’s suffering and death but also in their inability to grasp Jesus’s kingdom mission of compassionate, others-oriented service.¹⁴³ As Suzanne Watts Henderson states, “Mark predicates true discipleship not on full knowledge of Jesus’ precise identity but rather on his followers’ full participation in his kingdom-of-God agenda.”¹⁴⁴ The disciples’ opportunities to witness Jesus’s deeply felt compassion and to observe its effects on behalf of the

¹⁴¹ Spencer, *Passions*, 203.

¹⁴² See Williams, “Jesus as Lord,” 119: “Mark’s characterization of Jesus is not simply informational but also rhetorical; it has a communicative purpose. Jesus is the central figure of Mark’s Gospel, and a call to respond to him appropriately is central to the purpose for the book.” See also Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie (*Mark as Story*, 77): “The driving goal in Mark’s narrative is for God to establish rulership over the world. From this perspective, we can see how different characters further or oppose that goal, and we can see the unexpected ways the goal is met in spite of obstacles and opposition.”

¹⁴³ See Destro and Pesce, *Encounters with Jesus*, 169: “Jesus appears to have tried to inculcate in his disciples his own feelings and his own internal reaction when confronted by the presence of evil.”

¹⁴⁴ Suzanne Watts Henderson, *Christology and Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark*, SNTSMS 135 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 245.

suffering does not seem to produce similar results in their own encounters with human need in the Markan narrative.¹⁴⁵ Instead, they are often depicted as self-focused, more concerned about the status and advantages that could be afforded them because of their association with Jesus than about actively seeking the well-being of the afflicted and vulnerable whom they meet (see especially 8:22–10:52). Jesus “teaches the lesson of service and suffering on behalf of others, not the art of self-aggrandizement.”¹⁴⁶

These moments in which Jesus instructs his closest followers regarding the self-sacrifice and servanthood that mark the kingdom of God (e.g., 10:35–45) serve for the Markan audience to highlight how *they* might respond to human need.¹⁴⁷ And the miracle stories in which Jesus’s compassion is on display provide the example to match such instruction. Now the audience is left to decide whether they will learn from the disciples’ misunderstanding and truly follow Jesus’s way of compassionate service—toward all human need they encounter, regardless of a person’s social status, ethnicity, or condition. The story told by Mark is “but the beginning of the gospel; the good news continues beyond the narrative into the world of the implied audience.”¹⁴⁸

People—in the ancient world as today—could be motivated to do acts of service for others for a variety of reasons, including reputation, guilt, duty, or kindness.¹⁴⁹ In Mark’s depiction of Jesus’s encounters with those who are

145 Williams (“Jesus as Lord,” 117) points out that “One way to understand Jesus as he is characterized in Mark’s Gospel is to describe the traits or qualities that set him apart or distinguish him from the other people encountered in the narrative.” The compassion of Jesus highlights the lack of compassion in other characters (e.g., the disciples and the religious leaders) and vice versa. For Malbon (*Mark’s Jesus*, 207 n35), “Service becomes the most crucial character trait of the narrative.”

146 Kelber, *Mark’s Story*, 94. See also Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie (*Mark as Story*, 81, 108): “God’s rule is such that people are to use power to serve others, not to dominate or oppress them” (quotation is from p. 81).

147 Cotter makes the same point in her discussion of how the miracle stories of Mark point to the audience’s *Sitz im Leben*: When the audience encounters similar petitioners, “the portrait of Jesus in the miracle-story encounters calls for the abandonment of judgment, rejection, reproof, or denial on any grounds, and calls the followers to look beneath the externals to the desperate need, the anxiety, the shame, the abuse, and the social rejection that explain their externals. It calls on the followers to feel compassion, understanding, and more” (Cotter, *Christ of the Miracle Stories*, 9).

148 Malbon, *Mark’s Jesus*, 190, picking up on the language of Mark 1:1; see also Keith, “Markan Portrayal,” 24.

149 See Spencer, *Passions*, 172; see also Elliott, *Faithful Feelings*, 52: “The person who feels compassion is more likely to act and is better able to show sympathy than a person acting out of duty. Moreover, the receiver can tell if compassion is the motivation for the action,

suffering, the motivation to action stems from an inner emotional stirring that causes him to feel with and for the person(s) he encounters and move toward alleviating the suffering.¹⁵⁰

Is *imitatio Christi* in relation to Jesus's emotions possible? Can people be expected to alter their emotional outlook in a way that reflects an exemplar? If this reading of Mark's narrative is correct, the answer seems to be yes.¹⁵¹ In Mark, Jesus's acts of others-oriented service are often marked by σπλάγχνα, and in each case where the verb σπλαγχνίζομαι is used, the disciples' involvement in the miracle is central to the story.¹⁵² Jesus also frequently instructs his disciples concerning the others-focused, sacrificial emphasis of the kingdom he proclaimed and demonstrates through his miraculous acts on behalf of others what it means within that kingdom—here and now—for humans to experience restoration, wholeness, and flourishing. The expectation seems to be that the disciples—and by extension, Mark's audience—would do the

and, in realizing this, they receive greater comfort than if the act was performed out of duty."

150 See Anderson, *Emotions of Jesus*, 99; Spencer, *Passions*, 193: "On a gut level, Jesus feels others' pain, moving him to provide necessary aid."

151 Voorwinde, *Jesus' Emotions in the Gospels*, 215–17, is more skeptical on this point (in relation not only to Mark but to all four Gospels), largely because he places emphasis on distinguishing between emotions that display Jesus's divinity and emotions that display Jesus's humanity. He also contends that Jesus's foreknowledge plays a role in the emotions he expresses. For Voorwinde, since we are neither divine nor have foreknowledge, we cannot be expected to emulate Jesus's emotions. He does admit, though, that the emotions that are prescribed in non-narrative NT texts (i.e., the Epistles) are to be reproduced in the lives of Jesus's followers. I am not convinced such divisions (between what reflects divinity and what reflects humanity) regarding Jesus's emotions are possible to delineate. I prefer instead the approach of Spencer (*Passions*, 3), who acknowledges both that Jesus's capacity to experience emotions is integral to his "full participation in human experience" and that Jesus "reveals the passions of his divine Father." In other words, Jesus expresses the same kinds of emotions that God expresses *and* does so as a human. And contrary to Voorwinde, who places σπλαγχνίζομαι in the category of a divine emotion, it seems that a term with such a visceral, bodily connotation, a term that is not used of any divine miracle worker prior to the New Testament era, puts Jesus's humanity on display in these miracle stories. (This is not to say that Jesus does not share this kind of compassion with God; it is simply to say that Jesus's expression of compassion in these stories should not be viewed as void of his humanity.) See also Destro and Pesce, *Encounters with Jesus*, 169: "Emotions are a basic ingredient of the life of Jesus. He gets involved with persons and situations in the human world. ... Jesus is profoundly marked by all that is human, by all human emotions"; and Elliott, *Faithful Feelings*, 249.

152 Anderson, *Emotions of Jesus*, 198, states, "Mark shows Jesus' emotional experiences as integrated into Jesus' formation of his disciples to continue his mission."

same.¹⁵³ The term *σπλαγχνίζομαι* itself, with its visceral, physical—in a word, human—overtone, may have connoted something that any human could experience, whereas the extension of pity (*ἔλεος*) may have been the prerogative mainly of the privileged. Further, the empathic nature of the term—a deep feeling with and for a suffering other—suggests that it could also be extended toward anyone regardless of the position of the recipient of compassion to the giver of it.¹⁵⁴ Insofar as this was the case, the *σπλάγχνα*-compassion exhibited by Jesus and his followers was capable of crossing boundaries (e.g., ethnicity, gender, social status) in extending care toward others.

Regarding the ability to alter one's emotional outlook, the shift within emotion studies to favor more cognitive approaches in understanding human emotions corroborates the idea that emotions are not simply uncontrolled reactions to experiences but are connected closely to our thoughts and are capable of being learned.¹⁵⁵ This would support the notion that the early followers of Jesus could experience transformation in terms of how they reacted

153 In his discussion of the characterization of Jesus in Mark—with an emphasis on how Jesus is characterized as Lord—Williams, “Jesus as Lord,” 125, states, “Jesus is also Lord in that his life serves as the defining paradigm for his followers, so that in following Jesus’ example they choose a life of sacrificial service.” See also Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story*, 105–9: “Jesus leads the disciples primarily by example—in the way he helps those with less power than he, in the way he challenges the authorities who have more power than he, and in the way he faces persecution rather than abandon his mission” (quotation is from p. 109); Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 98: “The miracle stories teach Mark’s readers how to carry out their healing ministry by modeling what they see in the stories of Jesus”; Keener, *Miracles*, 767: “[Jesus’s] ministry to the broken summons his followers to address the same concerns on which Jesus acted”; Destro and Pesce, *Encounters with Jesus*, 158: “[Jesus] reveals his emotion in order to get others to share it and to take an active attitude toward other people”; Cotter, *Christ of the Miracle Stories*, 13: “These stories that reveal not only Jesus’ power, but also his person, are meant to inspire great confidence and love for Jesus, but they also instigate in his followers, as we have stated, a striving for emulation in the concrete examples.”

154 Indeed, this extension of *σπλάγχνα*-compassion is what we see in the *Testament of Zebulun* (see the discussion of dating the *Testaments* in chapter 4), in which *σπλάγχνα*-terms are prevalent and the stirring of compassion is exhibited toward people across the bounds of social status (i.e., not only those within one’s familial or social circle). As Driggers, “God as Healer,” 93, points out, the indiscriminatory nature of Jesus’s ministry extends beyond those petitioning for healing: “He reaches out to those whom first-century Jewish Palestinian culture would tend to marginalize, not only the physically infirm but ‘tax-collectors and sinners’ (2:14–17), children (9:36–37; 10:13–16), women (15:40–41, 47; 16:1), and Gentiles (5:1–20; 7:24–8:10).”

155 See the discussion of emotion studies at the beginning of chapter 2. For an argument that emotional responses are learned, see Damasio, *Descartes’ Error*. For an argument that the New Testament writers fell in line more with a cognitive approach than a non-cognitive (e.g., Stoic) approach to emotions, see Elliott, *Faithful Feelings*, 240–43.

emotionally in the face of human need—especially so as they are given the same source of power (Acts 2) as Jesus (Mark 1:9–15) to continue his work among the afflicted and vulnerable.¹⁵⁶ This idea of following Jesus in his emotions also accords with the injunctions that appear elsewhere in the New Testament to have σπλάγχνα-compassion (Col 3:12; cf. 2 Cor 6:12; Phil 1:8; 2:1; 1 John 3:17).¹⁵⁷ The compassion that characterizes the Markan Jesus is the same kind of compassion that came to be expected of Jesus's followers. Christian philosopher and ethicist Robert C. Roberts sums up well this notion of following Jesus in his compassion:

The absolute center of the Christian faith, the model for all Christian seeing and behaving, is the compassionate incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. The idea of a narrow-minded Christian is a contradiction. Broad-mindedness is a choice, but for the Christian the choice has already been made; to accept God's mercy in Jesus is to place oneself under constraint to strive for a broadness in one's self-concept and in one's mercy. When a person comes to acknowledge that Jesus is the Lord, she no longer has any choice about how far to go in identifying herself with weak, suffering, or sinful people. Because no person is too lowly for her Lord, none is too lowly for her, either. For this reason the Christian community does not settle for whatever compassion comes naturally, but educates for it. It holds constantly before itself the tender stooping love of God and by so doing constantly seeks to stretch the self-concepts of its individual members into a broad-mindedness imitative of its Lord's.¹⁵⁸

While Roberts doesn't explicitly point to the term σπλάγχνιζομαι here—used in Mark to express this sort of “broad-mindedness” in Jesus's others-oriented service—he aptly describes this aspect of Jesus's characterization and how Mark is using the portrayal of Jesus to effect change in his audience.

156 Another way of describing this intended “change” when it comes to Mark's audience is to pick up on Powell's terminology of “realistic empathy” and “idealistic sympathy.” Readers or hearers may initially empathize with characters who are similar to them (e.g., the disciples); this is “realistic empathy.” But as the story unfolds, readers or hearers may increasingly seek to empathize with characters who represent what they would like to be (e.g., Jesus).” Powell calls this “idealistic sympathy.” See Mark Allan Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* Guides to Biblical Scholarship (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 56; see also Destro and Pesce, *Encounters with Jesus*, 158.

157 See Elliott, *Faithful Feelings*, 54.

158 Roberts, *Spiritual Emotions*, 189–90.

These conclusions serve as an expression of how we can understand the term *σπλαγχνίζομαι* as contributing to Mark's characterization of Jesus and what that means for Mark's overall narrative and for his audience. What remains to be discussed is how this portrayal of the character Jesus may be situated within the broader depiction of miracle workers in the ancient world—the subject of my chapters 2 and 3. The concluding chapter that follows seeks to bring together the findings of our examination of miracle workers in ancient Greco-Roman and Jewish literature, showing how the characterization of the Markan Jesus fits within that picture.

Conclusion

So where does Mark's portrayal of the compassionate Jesus fit within first-century understandings of miracle workers? Does the portrayal of the Markan Jesus as one who enters into the suffering of those in need, feeling with and for the other—i.e., as one who is stirred with compassion upon encountering human need—offer something exceptional? If so, what does that mean for Mark's audience? Having examined the depiction of emotions among miracle workers from Greco-Roman and Jewish literature (chapters 2 and 3) and the contribution of the term *σπλαγχνίζομαι* (chapter 4) in Mark's characterization of Jesus (chapter 5), we are now prepared to offer some conclusions regarding this aspect of Markan characterization in relation to the broader literary context.

First, the prevalence of emotional depictions in the miracle stories of Mark seems to be unusual within Greco-Roman literature in general at the time, but it bears resemblance to what we see in the narrower body of Hellenistic Jewish literature.¹ As discussed in chapter 2, emotion language in miracle accounts from the Greco-Roman world is sparse, even among accounts of those deities renowned for their beneficence toward humanity (e.g., Asclepius, Heracles, and Isis). Meanwhile, the portrayal of a miracle worker's emotions occurs often in Jewish literature from the late Hellenistic and early imperial periods (see chapter 3). In accordance with Françoise Mirguet's analysis of emotions in Hellenistic Jewish literature, it was observed that the increase of emotion language in late Hellenistic Jewish writings likely has to do with the position of Jewish people in society. By demonstrating that pity and compassion were highly valued among the Jewish people—having roots in the (retold) stories of their ancestors—they could present themselves honorably to the society at large. And by depicting the pity of their God toward those who were suffering, Jewish writers could provide a model for emulation. Perhaps in depicting Jesus as a compassionate miracle worker, Mark was offering something similar for the early followers of Jesus in their relationship to the wider society—that

¹ As noted in chapter 2, the Homeric epics contain an abundance of emotion language in relation to wondrous deeds performed by the gods, and these stories would have been familiar to many in the first century CE. The point here is that among the works authored most proximate to the Gospel of Mark, there are very few instances of emotional depiction of miracle workers in Greco-Roman literature.

compassion is a central attribute to who they are, and that they have in the one they were following an ideal example to emulate.

Second, as noted in chapters 2 and 3, there are very few depictions of emotions among human miracle workers both in the wider Greco-Roman literature and in Hellenistic Jewish literature. In our examination of Greco-Roman miracle stories, only one account tied a human miracle worker's emotion to the working of the miracle. And in this single account, the joy attributed to Vespasian arises not in response to the benefit rendered to the suppliant but rather in relation to the onlookers' favorable impression of the miracle worker.² In the Jewish writings surveyed, the overwhelming majority of emotions linked to the working of miracles were attributed to God.³ What this observation suggests is that Mark's portrayal of Jesus, as a human miracle worker who is affected by human suffering and exhibits a deeply felt compassion toward others, is exceptional. The Markan Jesus was a miracle worker whom the people could see, hear, and touch,⁴ whose compassionate actions in response to encountered human need the characters in the story witness firsthand. And according to Mark's narrative, these human, embodied encounters by Jesus with the suffering were often laden with emotion.

Third, it was argued in chapters 2 and 3 that in the first-century Greco-Roman world, people would have been keenly aware that extending pity was the prerogative of those who were on the right side of the power differential. That is, those who typically bestowed pity toward one who was suffering both were removed from the situation that brought the suffering and were in a position (in terms of status and wealth) that allowed them to offer aid.⁵ This separation could ensure that the one extending pity could act in accordance with their own purposes and objectives without such actions intimately affecting them. For many people in the ancient world, the ultimate entity capable of extending aid, particularly when deliverance seemed possible only through extraordinary intervention, was a deity. In such cases, where miraculous

² Tacitus, *Histories* 4.81.

³ Four exceptions emerged: Josephus's treatment of Elisha in the story of the multiplied oil in *Antiquities* 9.47–50; Philo's allusion in *Moses* 1.101–125 to Moses's pity at the ending of the plague of darkness in Egypt; Philo's version of the Korah incident in *Moses* 2.279–283, in which Moses's anger directly precipitates the punitive miracle; and Sirach's discussion of Phinehas, whose zeal brings about the end of a plague (Sir 45:23–24).

⁴ Despite the Markan "messianic secrecy" motif, throughout the Gospel, people see, hear, and touch Jesus in his working of miracles (e.g., 1:25–27, 31, 33–34, 41; 2:5–12; 3:4–6; 5:8–14, 27–34; 6:56; 7:32–37; 8:23–25; 10:46–52).

⁵ I am indebted to Françoise Mirguet and her work on emotions in Hellenistic Jewish writings for this observation.

intervention was in view, a petitioner was dependent upon receiving pity from the deity—whether Asclepius, Heracles, or the God of Israel. The emotion terms most frequently on display in the miracle stories examined in chapters 2 and 3 are ἔλεος and cognates, terms that inherently suggest a power differential between giver and receiver, terms that are conducive to describing a miracle worker being involved in alleviating suffering while also maintaining a level of distance with the one who is suffering.

What was suggested in chapters 4 and 5 is that, in σπλάγχυν- terminology, Hellenistic Jewish authors began to find a different way of describing an emotional response to the pain and suffering of others. Σπλάγχνα and cognates provided a visceral, embodied, somatic-emotional description that did not seem to carry the same kind of power differential inherent in ἔλεος and cognates. The person exhibiting this kind of emotional response felt with and for the suffering other. The early followers of Jesus took up this σπλάγχυν- terminology in illustrating a virtuous emotional response to human suffering. By his use of σπλάγγνίζομαι, Mark characterized Jesus himself as displaying in his miracle-working activity this deeply felt, embodied compassion toward those in need. To add to the exceptional nature of this characterization, there is no record in the extant Greco-Roman or Jewish literature prior to the Gospel of Mark of a miracle worker being described in this way.

Finally, the depiction of Jesus the miracle worker as exhibiting σπλάγχνα-compassion seems to widen for the Markan audience the prospect of crossing boundaries in response to human need. Many people in the Greco-Roman world likely understood that the gods would be apt to show pity specifically to those who find favor with the gods, as demonstrated, for example, throughout the Homeric epics and in the attempts of petitioners to gain favor with a god through gifts at a healing shrine. Many first-century Jews likely understood such favor as being wrapped up in their identity as the people of God, corroborated by the many Jewish miracle stories in which God acted with pity on behalf of his people while performing punitive miracles against his enemies. And many people, both Jewish and non-Jewish, seem to have understood that acts of pity would be effected only in cases of innocence or righteousness—that is, when the person suffering had not caused their own suffering. But in the σπλάγχνα-compassion that characterizes the Markan Jesus—and subsequently, his followers—such barriers or qualifications seem to be inconsequential. The Markan Jesus extends his compassionate help to both Jews and Gentiles, to those likely to be viewed as sinful, to hungry crowds of presumably mixed social status, to those who were socially marginalized. And through both his actions demonstrated before his followers and his

teaching of others-oriented service, the Markan Jesus calls his followers to do the same—to respond to the needs in front of them regardless of differences in social status, gender, age, or ethnicity.

1 Areas for Further Study

The conclusions put forward in this study, tracing the use of emotion language in miracle stories in ancient Greco-Roman and Jewish contexts and seeing how the Markan Jesus emerges as an exceptional character within these contexts, particularly in his compassionate response to human need, leaves some questions—prospects for further study.

First, as indicated in chapter 5, there are about a dozen specific emotion words that appear in the Gospel of Mark. *Σπλαγχνίζομαι* is the most frequently used of these words and has an interesting history (as hopefully by this point readers would agree), but are there other terms that could generate a comparable study? Terms conveying Jesus's anger (*ὀργή* and *ἐμβριμάομαι*) immediately come to mind, but there may be others worth examining in greater detail. While the general study of emotions and the Bible has begun to garner greater attention in the last decade, this kind of detailed look at specific emotion terms seems virtually untapped.

A second aspect of the present work that could yield additional study is the attentiveness to the relationship of emotions and characterization. One desired outcome of the present study is to demonstrate a way of making this relationship more explicit. In my research in both narrative criticism broadly and characterization studies specifically, I discovered surprisingly little on emotions. What more can we learn from the ancient sources about how emotions were used to shape ideas about characters and to inform an audience in their response to those characters? Do any other New Testament books employ emotions among characters to develop themes or to encourage action, as we see with *σπλαγχνίζομαι* in relation to the Gospel of Mark?

Finally, the present study, which was narrowed to Mark, naturally precipitates the question, How are *σπλαγχνίζομαι* and cognates employed in other early Christian literature, including Matthew and Luke? The present research touched on the use of this terminology in other early Christian texts, but within the limitations of the study, I stayed proximate to Mark's Gospel when incorporating other Christian texts. And in focusing specifically on Mark's narrative, I intentionally avoided reading Matthew and Luke into my interpretation of Mark. But Matthew and Luke do employ *σπλαγχνίζομαι*, sometimes in material that parallels Mark (Matt 9:36; 14:14; 15:32), but often in material that has

no Markan parallel, including parables (Matt 18:27; Luke 7:13; 10:33; 15:20). The usage of the word to describe the Samaritan in Luke 10 is particularly interesting as it constitutes the only instance in the Gospels where the subject of the verb is not Jesus or God (and a Samaritan no less!).⁶ How do Matthew's and Luke's adaptations of this term (assuming Markan priority) contribute to the ways in which they characterize Jesus? Do we see in Matthew's or Luke's characterization of Jesus, as we have seen in Mark, a demonstration of a response to others' pain worth emulating? And to extend the discussion beyond the New Testament, how do writers during the first few centuries of the Christian church employ this term and cognates?

2 Compassion and Today

As one who has invested much time and energy in the church, and who has a deep love for the church, I would be remiss not to mention the pastoral insights this study has brought to my attention. Sadly, throughout history—and including our own age—much that has been done in the name of Jesus is the opposite of compassion. The stories of those who have trampled on others for the sake of status or reputation—a skewed view of what the kingdom of God is about—are seemingly endless. And it seems that far too often the great command of love for neighbor has been supplanted by the great protection and promotion of self. And lest I come across as being fully “outside the problem,” I must admit that in my own years of ministry and in life, I have too often failed to see through the lens of compassion the human needs directly in front of me and have too often been selective in my compassion.

May those of us who claim to follow the Jesus that Mark portrays take notice of the way he responded to human need and the way he felt for and with those who were suffering. And may we truly see people and allow ourselves to be deeply affected by the pain and suffering of those we encounter. And may we, as Mark's twenty-first-century audience, respond accordingly to the story of Jesus, the compassionate shepherd whose care extends across the boundaries we often work so hard to establish.

6 The presumed subject of *σπλαγχνίζομαι* in the parables of Matthew 18:23–35 and Luke 15:11–32 is God. Elsewhere in the Gospels, the subject is always Jesus.

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Why does the Gospel of Mark make specific and repeated reference to the compassion of Jesus in the miracle stories? This volume discusses the function that compassion has in the Markan characterization of Jesus, particularly in how the terminology employed depicts Jesus as entering the suffering of others. In doing so, it underscores how this portrayal is exceptional among the stories of miracle workers in ancient Greco-Roman and Jewish literature. In Mark, this compassion toward the suffering other is a central feature of the kingdom of God, an attribute the Markan audience is challenged to emulate.

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